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THE COMMUNISTS AND THE STRUGGLE  
FOR NEGRO LIBERATION

FORD



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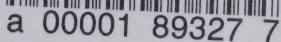
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# The Communists and the Struggle for Negro Liberation

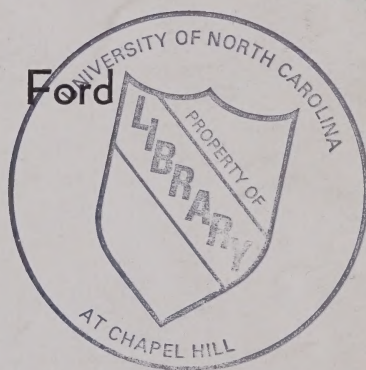
THEIR POSITION ON PROBLEMS

OF AFRICA  
OF THE WEST INDIES  
OF WAR  
OF ETHIOPIAN INDEPENDENCE  
OF THE STRUGGLE FOR PEACE

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By  
James W. Ford



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THE COMMUNISTS  
AND THE STRUGGLE  
FOR NEGRO LIBERATION





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# Introduction

## Can Garveyism and Communism Mix?

This question as answered by some of the leading members of the Universal Negro Improvement Association can only breed disunity among the Negro masses at a time when united organization and action is imperative. Of course, there are many points in the programs of the two movements which differ. But both are agreed that black men should be freed from the domination of imperialists in Africa and throughout the world. We both agree that Mussolini's fascist hordes should be driven from Ethiopia; that Ethiopia's independence must be maintained. However different our ultimate aims for society as a whole we are agreed on all points against imperialism, whether in Africa, West Indies, or America, such as Africa for Africans, self-determination for Africa and the West Indies, the independence of Ethiopia.

Those who argue against unity of action NOW are in the position of the man who would not accept the help of his friend in moving the furniture from his burning house because the friend wanted to advise WHERE the furniture should go LATER. Well, let us unite to save Ethiopia and safeguard the black man's rights NOW. History will determine as to who is right about what is to be done later.

It is no idle reflection that if the Negroes had been really united and *had known how to effect and utilize allies among other nationalities, Ethiopia today would be a far different story.*

## Who Are Mussolini's Enemies?

Some of the leaders still cry "Stop Communism!" "Expel the Reds!" Those who do this are consciously or unconsciously aiding the followers and supporters of Mussolini. For it is well known that Mussolini so fears the Communists among his own people that thousands of them now grace his dungeons. Shall we join with Mussolini to crush the Communists or join with the Communists to crush Mussolini? Negroes certainly cannot ignore the old military axiom: "Seek out your enemy's enemy for an ally."

It is, therefore, a question of *which whites* can be considered allies of the Negro organizations, *which whites* will support the program aimed at world freedom for the blacks. Let us see!

Hearst and the Republicans have already shown their alliance with Mussolini. They are carrying on powerful propaganda each day for recognition of his steal. This is coupled with their activities

in this country promoting the Ku Klux Klan organizations, fighting labor organizations, and belittling Negroes generally.

If LaGuardia represents Fusion, his activities in raising money for the fascist Red Cross is a good indication of where this white group stands. Besides this, the Mayor has a medal of honor from Mussolini himself, and has nothing but praise for the Italian Government.

The Democrats who control the government have said nothing about the rape of Ethiopia and will not even aid those other powers on a world scale to enforce the decisions of the League of Nations. Judges Cotillo, Aurelio, and Pecora, Tammanyites, are open supporters of Mussolini in this country, cooperating with the fascist consuls throughout the country in whipping up pro-Mussolini sentiment among the Italian masses.

### **Police Attack Ethiopian Defense**

These are the most outstanding cases. But what about DeMartini, the police inspector in Harlem and his Negro stooges, who try to stop the protest of Harlem Negroes against the conquest of Ethiopia? Who is responsible for the oversized police "army of occupation" in Harlem following the fall of Addis Ababa? Who is responsible for allowing Italian Consuls to carry on fascist propaganda in America, despite diplomatic agreements with the United States Government?

Yet there are some members of the U.N.I.A. who would unite the organization with the political programs of one or the other of the above-mentioned groups. In other words, they would use the "red scare" to win support among Negroes for those whites who have everything in their power to defeat the cause of Negro freedom have done everything in their power to defeat the cause of Negro freedom here and help consolidate Mussolini's ill-gotten gains in Ethiopia.

### **United Action Can Defeat The Fascist Invasion**

We should unite to demand that the fascist consuls be restrained from propaganda work in this country!

Demand the removal and censure of pro-fascist American officials.

Demand action from the State Department against Italian conquest in Ethiopia; aid in enforcing economic sanctions; no recognition of the fascist mandate!

Demand Harlem representatives in city, state, and national bodies present resolutions favoring Ethiopian independence!

Organize perpetual picketing of Italian consulates with the Ethiopian flag by a united Ethiopian Defense.

Boycott Italian imports and arouse Negro and white longshore workers against military shipments to Italy.

Only a united mass defense can yet save a bleeding Ethiopia from the clutches of the fascist brute.



Mr. Garvey has shown the way by co-operating with the anti-imperialist league in England. Let us follow by building a powerful movement here for defense of Ethiopia and the rights of Black men everywhere.

Disunity and wrangling means demoralization and defeat; the united front leads to victory and regeneration.

For these things we Communists have always, do, and always will stand ready.

HARLEM DIVISION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY.

# ***For the Emancipation of Negroes From Imperialism***

*(A report to the 2nd World Congress of the League Against  
Imperialism at Frankfurt, Germany, in July, 1929.)*

*[Abridged.]*

By JAMES W. FORD

## **1. General Statement**

The so-called Negro "problem" has seldom been stated from the class point of view. We are in the period of the decline and decay of capitalism. Capitalism and imperialism are undergoing rapid change because of this decline. Everywhere the standards of living of the workers and peasants are being pushed down. Millions of workers throughout the world are thrown out of employment by the capitalist system. In the shops and factories and on the farms, workers and poor farmers are being forced to work at an increased speed. This is done in order that the capitalist may make greater profits at the expense of the workers.

This period of the decline of capitalism is of great significance to the working class and oppressed people, and is of very great importance to the Negro people in the various parts of the world. The future history of the Negro in his struggle for liberation, for political, social and economic advancement, depends upon how we estimate the present period of imperialism, the concrete organizational tasks that we lay down in order to bring about this liberation. We must mobilize our forces for joint struggle with the world proletariat in the international struggle against imperialism. We have already seen the great struggles of the Chinese workers and peasants. We see rising waves of revolt and struggle in India, and in China. We are witnessing great waves of revolt of the working class in the homelands of imperialism.

## **Imperialism and The Negro**

For our purpose, in dealing with the special question of the Negro, imperialism is the stage of capitalism when the whole world has been divided among a few great capitalist powers, and especially when the territory of Africa has been completely divided between them; and when there has developed among the Negroes of America sharp class lines.

## **The World War Awakens Negroes**

During the imperialist war of 1914-18 hundreds of thousands of Negroes from all parts of the world were brought into direct

contact with the customs and "culture" of the so-called white western civilization. Millions of Negroes were brought from the agricultural and peasant regions of the Southern part of the U.S.A. into the industries of the North. This developed a huge Negro industrial proletariat. At the same time capitalism has carried industrial development into Africa, and there produced—especially in South Africa—a big native proletariat.

Already the period since the world war has brought about class-consciousness, revolt and resistance of Negro toilers against imperialism. But in order to understand the present period of the Negro's struggle, it is necessary for us to review briefly the older periods of exploitation and oppression of Negroes by the capitalists.

### **Policy of Imperialism**

The economic and political enslavement of the Negro peoples has extended over a period of 300 years, and may be divided into three stages.

1. THE CLASSICAL PERIOD—the period of merchant capitalism, which was the period of snatching of slaves from Africa, marked the birth of the notorious African slave trade. This was the time when the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British capitalists were at the high tide of their business of stealing slaves from Africa. It has been said that over 100,000,000 Negroes were torn from Africa during the course of these 300 years. Great fortunes were made on the slave traffic.

Profits ranged from 100 per cent to 150 per cent on the sale of slaves. The average price of slaves were: in 1840, \$325; in 1850, \$360; in 1860, \$500. It was on the basis of slave traffic profits, including the rape of India, that England was able to lay the basis of the British Empire. Also, great fortunes were made by the slave dealers in America. Thus it is clearly seen that capitalist exploitation for profits was the basis for the beginning of the enslavement of the Negro people.

2. THE SECOND PERIOD—the period of industrial capitalism—was the beginning of the territorial division of Africa, and the exploitation of its natural resources, and the labor power of the natives in Africa. Because the slave traffic became less profitable for the capitalists, this period marked the beginning of the doing away with the "legal" slave traffic. It was during this period that the natural resources of Africa helped to build up the great manufacturing enterprises in England. In America the doing away with the slave traffic was replaced by the intense plantation exploitation of the Negro slaves. The profits made on the plantation exploitation of the Negro slave laid the basis for the present wealth of American imperialism. Thus the stopping of the slave traffic did not stop the profit making of the capitalists. It merely increased their profit making.



3. **THE THIRD STAGE**—and this is the period that we are most concerned with—is the period of imperialism. This period marks the completion of the division of Africa by the main capitalist powers, and marks the complete enslavement of its people. This period also is the period when the main capitalist powers are organizing to fight each other for the redivision of Africa. It is a period also when the workers are being speeded up and exploited at a greater rate by the capitalists in order to make more profits. Hundreds of thousands and millions of Negro toilers are being thrown out of work. But at the same time the Negro toilers everywhere are struggling against this extreme exploitation and oppression. Widespread revolt is spreading among Negro toilers in different parts of the world.

### **The Modern Policy of Imperialism**

What is the policy of imperialism? Imperialism is holding the African colonies as "country sides" for agricultural development. All the imperialists are hindering the industrial development of the country to this end. They are therefore carrying on a policy which perpetually hinders the advancement of the toiling masses. They actually exterminate the people by the thousands, killing the populations and destroying whole towns.

Africa is a leading source of raw materials, a market center for extra capital investment. The markets and raw materials are becoming short. This is the main reason for the jealousy and rivalry between the various capitalist countries and is leading them to war.

### **The Native Workers of South Africa**

The great majority of the South African population is Negro. There are about five and one-half millions of native Negroes and colored, and about one and one-half millions of whites. The Negroes are the majority of the working class. There are 467,013 or about 70 per cent Negro and colored workers, and about 176,073 or 23 per cent white workers. In mining there are over 300,000 Negroes to about 40,000 whites. In transportation there are 40,000 Negroes and 66,000 whites; in the general production industries there are 120,000 Negroes and 71,000 whites.

In the Belgian Congo in 1919 in the gold, copper and diamond mines there were 31,000 native workers; in 1926 there were 61,000; in the Union of Katagu there were 16,448 native workers.

### **Agricultural Workers**

In South Africa the native and colored population may be divided as follows:

(1) Natives on their own tribal lands (reserves) .....	51%
(2) Natives on European-owned lands .....	34%
(3) Native workers in mines and cities .....	14%

The agricultural output has gradually increased in South Africa. The export in 1910 was 9,500,000 pounds; in 1927 it was 22,000,000 pounds. The number of dairy factories increased from 59 to 124 during the period of 1915-25.

In Sierra Leone, Nigeria and the whole West Coast of Africa there are vast agricultural developments. The same is true of the Belgian Congo.

In South Africa the native reserves form only one-eighth of the total land of the Union, and natives are not allowed to buy land outside of the reserves. Certain lands that were to be turned back to the natives are being given the white settlers, for example, large sections suitable for cotton growing in Northern Transvaal. The existing reserves are totally insufficient for the natives. A large number of natives are compelled for this reason and also because of taxation and the pressure of the native chiefs (who act as agents for the government) to go out and work in the white lands. One-third of the native adult male population is all the time away at work in the towns or on the farms.

### **West Indies**

The West Indies are typically agricultural islands. The West Indian Islands are under the iron hand of the imperialists. Haiti is under the iron heel of the American marines of the National City Bank of Wall Street. The independence of Haiti gained during the Haitian revolution when French domination was overthrown has been completely nullified by the U. S. marines. The people have been garrotted, and are being ruled by the American imperialists. The country, in spite of its natural richness, is in poverty, the like of which has not been seen since the days before the Haitian revolution.

In Trinidad the natives are ruled by the iron hand of British imperialism. The workers are suppressed by the troops of the British Empire stationed there.

In Guadeloupe the same thing is true. Here French imperialism keeps the workers and peasants down to the level of slaves.

Here we find some kind of "community" improvement resorted to: Natives at the points of bayonets of U. S. marines (Haiti) are forced to build roads without pay. Negroes in Haiti and Jamaica are conscripted for work on the sugar plantations of Cuba. They are taken to Cuba and forced to work for wages lower than the Cuban workers, and racial frictions are engendered between the imported natives and the workers of Cuba.

### **Tactics in the Struggle Against Imperialism**

The struggle for liberation is found only through organization, organization along class lines, for class struggle. Our struggle is bound up with the struggle of the international proletariat and we

must line up in the international revolutionary class struggle the world over, by organizing our forces for joint struggle. It is necessary to follow a trade union program. This program must be based on the following demands:

Equal pay for equal work.

An Eight-Hour Day.

Against forced labor.

For protective labor legislation.

Protection for women and youth workers.

Freedom of trade unions.

Against class cooperation.

Against racial barriers in trade unions.

Organization of Negro workers into revolutionary trade unions.

Against white terrorism and lynchings.

Organization of defense corps.

Better housing and social conditions.

Organization of agricultural workers.

Against the confiscation of peasant and communal lands.

Against poll tax and hut tax.

For equal civil rights.

## **Liberation Movements**

The liberation movements of Negro peoples take different forms in different countries. The main thing is that they must be initiated by the toiling masses of workers and peasants. The demands of the great bulk of the population must be the center of action. No liberation movement of the Negroes can be helpful for the Negro masses unless the masses are the driving force. Liberation movements cannot play a decisive role in the liberation of the Negroes representing partial middle class demands of the petty-bourgeoisie and intellectuals. If the petty-bourgeoisie and the intellectuals want to serve the masses they must be the servants of the masses, and the masses must see that they are their servants.

The program of liberation movements must also offer the masses real assistance in their desperate needs and conditions. For this it is necessary to have a program.

## **A Program**

Here we cannot outline any detailed program suitable for every country alike. Each country must work out a program on the basis of its local conditions. We can only point out a general direction.

### **a. The Land Question**

1. Demand the return to Negroes of land formerly held by them.
2. The abolition of all taxes on land, poll and hut taxes.
3. Demand support for agriculture such as seed, implements, stock, etc.



4. Repeal of Land Acts.
5. The establishment of agricultural organizations for poor peasants and the formation of farm laborers' Unions.

### **b. Civil Rights**

1. Freedom of speech, assembly, press, etc.
2. Abolition of pass laws.
3. Evacuation of imperialist soldiers from the lands of the Negroes.
4. Abolition of peonage.
5. Abolition of jim-crow laws and segregation.
6. Universal suffrage.
7. Abolition of caste systems and racial divisions.

### **c. Taxation**

1. The abolition of all forms of taxation that enslave and place great burden of debts upon the backs of the working population, including loans, custom regulations, in the hands of the imperialists; and the weighing down of the people with great revenue taxes.

### **d. Education**

1. The elimination of illiteracy; the establishment of free universal education.

### **e. Social Conditions**

1. The elimination of "Ghetto" life and conditions ("Black Belts" and residential segregation).
2. The elimination of congestion that is detrimental to health.
3. Proper hospitalization for children and especially for expectant mothers—free hospitals and free dispensaries.

### **f. Labor Conditions**

1. Establishment of labor inspection laws.
2. Abolition of child labor.
3. Establishment of full trade union rights.

### **Ultimate Aims of These Tactics**

These programs, the trade union and the liberation, are very closely connected with the struggle for self-determination, for native republics, for separation from imperialism and capitalism and as such are direct blows at the very heart of imperialism, at the very heart of exploitation and oppression.

### **Independence, Self-Rule and Self-Determination in South Africa**

The native population of South Africa has no political rights. The power of the state is in control of the white ruling class which has armed forces at its disposal.

The Boers were defeated by the forces of the British imperialists at the close of the last century. But now as the development of capitalism goes on in South Africa the interests of the different South African white capitalist groups as well as the British imperialist groups become more blended. All are forming together for the exploitation of the native population.

At the same time the white capitalists corrupt and bribe certain Negro leaders and convert them into reformist agents against the interests of the great masses of the working population. This unity of the white capitalist ruling class with the Negro leaders makes it necessary for the white and black proletariat and the landless native peasantry to unite for a struggle against the white capitalists and the Negro fakers.

South Africa is a black country. The majority of the population is black and so is the majority of workers and peasants. The basis of the South African question is the black peasantry whose land has been taken away from them by the white ruling class.

In South Africa therefore we put forward and struggle for:  
*A native South African republic, based on the workers and peasants, with safeguards and full rights for all national minorities.*

### **West Africa**

There must be the complete and unconditional independence of the colonies of West Africa (Sierra Leone, Gold Coast, Gambia and Nigeria).

#### **Liberia**

Liberia must have her complete independence and the immediate withdrawal of American imperialist agents from the territory.

#### **Belgian Congo**

The independence of the Belgian Congo and French Equatorial Africa.

#### **Abyssinia**

The unqualified independence of Abyssinia; the abrogation of all treaties that provide for the division of Abyssinia.

#### **Haiti**

Haiti must have her unconditional sovereignty and independence; all debts must be cancelled; all customs restored and the abrogation of all treaties that are directed towards the political and economic enslavement of Haiti.

#### **Jamaica**

Jamaica must have her unconditional independence and complete separation from the British Empire.

### **Central American Countries**

For all the Central and South American Countries where there are Negroes we demand the full and complete political, economic and social equality for the Negroes.

## East Africa

For all the colonies of East Africa we struggle for, and demand:

1. The evacuation of the colonies by the British.
2. The return of stolen property.

### The Negro and the War Danger

Approximately 70,000,000 workers and peasants of all races, nationalities and countries, deluded by the lying press and propaganda of the imperialists and betrayed by the reformists, social-democrats and pacifists, were dragged into the imperialist war of 1914-1918; over ten millions were killed and 29 millions returned home crippled and diseased in body and mind. What for? *For imperialist plunder, rapine and pillage!*

#### 1. Negroes and the Late War

Particularly significant is the number of Negro toilers drawn from factories and farms who participated in this war. In America alone 2,000,000 Negroes were registered for military service; 200,000 saw active service on the battlefields of France either as combatant troops or labor stevedores, and thousands of them were killed or maimed. Regardless of these sacrifices brought by the Negro workers to the altar of imperialism, the American imperialists continued to carry on racial prejudices even against Negro troops in France, to say nothing of their practices of lynching and segregation at home. Thirteen Negro soldiers of the American Army were hanged and 26 were sentenced to prison for long periods for protesting and organizing a revolt against the abuses of mobs on the persons of Negro women in the southern part of the U.S.A. "Legalized lynchings" were carried out in France, and the beastly sport of taking moving pictures of these hangings, to be shown in the United States, were conducted by the imperialist agents.

At the close of the war lynchings of Negroes in U.S.A. immediately increased. Negro soldiers were lynched in the South for wearing the uniform of the U.S. Army. Fearful of the growing unrest amongst the workers in general, growing out of the awakening class-consciousness of the working class as a result of experiences of the war, race riots between black and white workers, causing the loss of many lives, partly to offset the growing class-consciousness and militancy of the workers against the imperialists, were instigated in several of the large industrial centers of America by imperialist agents. In these riots the militia forces were used against Negroes. These are only preludes to the pogroms that will be resorted to against the proletariat and toiling Negroes whenever in an extreme crisis, the workers threaten the American bourgeoisie.

Negroes of the French colonies supplied six regiments of tens of thousands of troops for France's army. Over 30,000 lost their



lives in the horrible slaughter. These black troops were France's "shock troops"; they walked into the mouth of death unflinchingly. Many thousands died from cold, being unaccustomed to the Northern European winters.

Following the war, native troops who fought and died on "equal terms" with white troops were allowed only one-half of the meagre pension granted white troops. The yoke of enslavement, as is well known, has been tightenend around the necks of the natives of the French colonies since the war. French imperialist colonial policy is decimating the population of Equatorial Africa.

Already the construction of the first 140 kilometres of the Ocean-Congo Railway (which is being constructed in haste to transport native troops for the next war) has cost the lives of 17,000 natives. One thousand Negroes have been shot by the Societe Forestiere (Forest Company). In one section the population has been reduced from 1,150,000 to 300,000. In other sections, because of intense exploitation, between 4,000 and 5,000 deaths have occurred for every 200,000 inhabitants.

Goaded to death by these intolerable conditions the natives rose in revolt in November, 1928. This revolt was crushed in the blood of the natives. All of this and more has occurred in the French colonies since the last imperialist war in which the native troops served as cannon fodder for French imperialism. Thus, French imperialist colonial policy is exposed to the Negro people of the world who have viewed France as free, liberty loving, and "democratic." Remove this fake cloak of bourgeois justice and liberty, and you see blood-thirsty, cruel imperialist France stand forth.

The British Empire has been built on the blood of colonial troops. The natives of Africa bled their share in the imperialist war of 1914-18. English imperialism has been very subtle in using Negro and colonial troops to "pull her chestnuts out of the fire" and to police the world for her.

Negro troops fought with Allenby in the Egyptian campaign and in Palestine. Her activities are well-known in the use of African workers for her imperialist war as well as the use of black troops in her counter-revolutionary efforts against the Red Army of the Soviet Union. For all this, British imperialism is at present systematically, carefully and cruelly pushing forward her program of exploitation and oppression of Negroes from the West Indies to South Africa.

## 2. Preparing Negroes for the Next War

Notwithstanding all this, all these imperialist nations are pushing on their campaigns to prepare their "black armies" for the next war; already imperialist agents are spreading "scientific" propaganda to the effect that Negro troops are 80 per cent more immuned from poisonous gas than white troops, and therefore France must

counteract the highly developed chemical industry of Germany by creating a huge black army.

Already America is training Negroes in her military camps.

France's black army is world renowned. England on the eve of battle will conscript her black army.

Fearful of class-conscious proletarians in their armies and because of the dearth of white peasants to conscript, the imperialists (believing the Negroes backward, docile and less liable to the influence of revolutionary propaganda than white troops) intend to use large numbers of Negro troops in their armies as cannon fodder and in case revolution breaks out amongst white troops at the front and white workers at the rear, to use Negro troops to crush the revolutionary movement.

Even now black troops are being used to suppress the struggles of workers (in France). England plans to send black troops into China to suppress the Chinese revolution. America uses black troops in Mexico.

And finally, they are planning to lead hordes of black troops to throw against the U.S.S.R. to attempt to crush the homeland, the fatherland of the proletariat and of the oppressed peoples.

### **Negroes Must Struggle Against the Next War**

Negro working men and women, join the struggle against imperialist war!

Negro working men and women, join the strike struggles of the workers!

Negro working men and women in the colonies, organize against imperialist war!

Negro troops, fraternize with the workers; do not go against the workers!

Young Negro soldiers in the barracks and Reserve Officers' Training Corps and in the army, demonstrate against war!

Negro soldiers, organize!

Gain contact with Negro workers in the factories!

Expose petty-bourgeois Negro politicians.

Negro soldiers, refuse to police the world for the imperialists!

Negro constabularies, refuse to go against your brothers for the imperialists!

Negro ex-service men, organize and demonstrate against imperialist war!

Negro workers and peasants, struggle against propaganda which creates pacifist illusions amongst the toilers.

Negro workers, peasants and soldiers, turn the imperialist war into a civil war against your oppressors!

Negro soldiers, in the event of war, fraternize with the soldiers of the opposing armies!

Down with race war, long live the class war!

Negro workers, peasants and soldiers, defend the Soviet Union against imperialism!

Only hand in hand with the international revolutionary proletariat in its fight against imperialism and capitalism can the Negro worker and peasant attain their freedom from political, economic and racial oppression.

### **International Character of Struggle Against Imperialism**

The Negro toilers are learning that their struggle for liberation and freedom has an international aspect and that it is bound up with the struggle of the workers and oppressed peoples of all lands. We have already pointed out how imperialism is penetrating Africa and bringing Negroes more and more within the clutches of their exploitation. We have pointed out the large investments that are being made in Africa—which are increasing as investments are threatened and weakened in India and China. The exploitation of the Negroes becomes one of the main links of imperialism.

But the Negroes' struggle for freedom cannot be fought upon the basis of race or nationalism solely. This also is true of the working class in the various countries and demands the strictest understanding and attention of both. The struggle is international, involving the unity of the Negro peoples with the exploited and oppressed of all countries.

The Negro people must begin to break down all policies and tendencies that isolate them and isolate the workers and oppressed peoples of other countries from their struggles. This is of great significance since "race war" slogans and racial issues are being raised to obscure the real struggle against imperialism.

R. Palme Dutt, in his book, "Modern India," points this out very clearly by the following statement:

"European bourgeois writers have begun to speak, with their usual foolishness, of the Revolt of Asia and Africa and supposed menaces to 'white civilization.' This is, of course, nonsense, equally as much as the attacks these same writers make on the rise of the working class in their own countries. In either case, what is taking place is no mysterious menace or conspiracy, but a very simple process of millions of human beings endeavoring to free themselves from the existing subjection (a subjection that these same bourgeois writers would protest against very vociferously, if placed under it themselves).

"The 'white civilization' of which these writers speak does not mean the existence and livelihood of the millions of workers and peasants in Europe, who have their own problems to face, but means simply a certain system of subjection and exploitation established by force in Asia and Africa, and established also over the workers and peasants of capitalist Europe."

Besides, the American press is writing about the "Red Peril,"



characterizing the Soviet Union as an enemy of the "white" races and as leading the brown, black and yellow peoples into struggle against white supremacy and "white civilization." But what these imperialists really fear is the *class war*. Down with "*race war*."

We must join the class war in which the liberation of the Negro people will go hand in hand with the world movement of the working class and oppressed people against imperialism and capitalism.

At the same time the international working class must come to the full realization that its struggle is intimately bound up with the liberation movements of the Negro people—that they cannot successfully struggle against imperialism when imperialism is extending exploitation amongst the Negro peoples. We have already pointed out how certain sections of the working class follow a policy of chauvinism, and even cooperate with the imperialists in the exploitation of Negroes. We have seen what the Labor Party of England, in 1924, did regarding the colonies. We have already seen the passing of the recent colonial development bill for Africa by the Labor Party, which has as its aim the extending of imperialist exploitation primarily amongst the colonies of Africa.

Negro toilers are beginning more and more to enter the international struggle, into the labor movement which has a revolutionary program against imperialism. We will join in international unity.

Finally, the Negro toiling masses must realize that their struggle against chauvinism, against all discrimination, whether carried on by the imperialists or by social reformists, or by backward elements in the labor movement, can only be overcome by their bringing their organized force into the struggle.

We must have power that is represented by organization. The sooner we have power, the sooner we will be respected in all quarters. We must realize that our cry for equality, etc., will only be heard when we are organized. I beg my people in all lands and climes to organize their forces for a unified and combined struggle for liberation, for the overthrow of imperialism.

# ***The First International Conference of Negro Workers***

**Held at Hamburg, Germany, 1930.**

*Report of JAMES W. FORD*

*Comrades:*

We are meeting at a time of acute crisis of capitalism that has reached throughout the world most seriously affecting colonial lands. We have before us very big tasks. We must face the serious business of getting down to the problems that face the Negro workers and the Negro people under capitalist exploitation and oppression in the various parts of the world. We are gathered here at this conference for that purpose. This conference must make a broad political demonstration and broadcast to the widest possible masses of Negro toilers the results of our discussions. We must take up organizational questions relating to the economic situation and working conditions of the Negro workers—industrial and agricultural workers; we must discuss lynching, terrorism, police and soldier massacres, pass-laws and restrictions, racial discriminations, forced labor, the coming imperialist war and a number of other questions and problems. We will of course have to reach some decisions, but these decisions should not have to be of a binding character on the delegates here. We are here for no political controversies. We are of many political faiths here to discuss openly and frankly the situation of the Negro workers as it actually is in the world today and to discuss and to study the effects of capitalist exploitation and imperialist oppression upon the Negro people—and I think we can all agree despite what others may say that the deplorable conditions of the Negroes grow out of the capitalist system of exploitation. We are here to discuss the role of the Negro workers in the international labor movement. It is under these conditions that I bring greetings to the representatives of the Negro workers—as well as to the fraternal representatives of the other races here—from the Provisional International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers that has convened this *First International Conference of Negro Workers*. In order to get down to these problems I would say that we must discuss the present world situation and the past which is also heavy upon the memory of the Negro toilers. What in general outline are the questions that we must take up? (1) Briefly, the economic and political situation through which the capitalist world has been passing during recent years. (2) The position and conditions of the Negro workers and the Negro people under capitalism—Negro oppression and the freedom of the Negro

peoples. In discussing these questions we will naturally come to the significance and importance of workers. I assure you that the capitalists are looking with very great concern upon our efforts and the Negro workers expect much.

## I.

In-so-far as we can deal with dates I will start with the period beginning around 1928. At that time great rivalries between the leading imperialist powers (and in the first place between the U.S.A. and Great Britain) were very acute and strained. Why? First, there was the question of redividing the world between themselves in order to make greater profits, especially to redivide the colonial and foreign markets, where they might sell their goods and send their money for investment and inhuman exploitation. As there can be no "gentlemanly" agreements about such things these rivalries led the U.S.A. and Britain, as well as the other imperialist nations into a race of war preparations, military alliance, etc. Imperialist war is how they try to settle such matters. And as I have said the U.S.A. is pushing Great Britain hard for financial supremacy, German bourgeoisie want back their lost colonies, France and Japan, too, want more world markets and colonial lands.

Secondly, in order to make financial and economic preparations for redividing the world and profits, it was necessary for these imperialist nations to create powerful financial combines and international trusts. But in order to carry this through and because of the keen competition for profit for themselves, it was necessary, first, for them to begin to do it at the expense of the workers in the capitalist countries, by speeding them up, by introducing new machinery, both of which made it possible to increase the production of goods. But this threw thousands of workers out of jobs and meanwhile there began the slashing of wages right and left. This super abundance of goods had to find a market, because the workers could not buy them, so therefore the bitter struggle for foreign markets and colonial lands.

On top of this naturally, there began a more intense struggle of the workers against capitalist exploitation.

Thirdly, I could name you a whole series of evidences of how the capitalists began to reduce the standards of the workers in every country, reduce wages, increase the hours of work, to throw thousands of workers on the streets, and how with the aid of their police, soldiers and capitalist courts they beat back the workers; and last but not the least of significance, how the reformist trade union officials and organizations helped the bosses against the workers—the American Federation of Labor, the Amsterdam International and so on. But I will not take your time to point out one by one these cases. I merely want to point out the leading facts.

Fourthly. Now let us take a look at the other side of the world—the colonial world, here is where capitalism is doing its best to



perpetuate slavery in order to relieve its burdens. And when you, especially you from the lands of Africa and the West Indies who know the condition of slavery under which the toilers there on every hand are working and living, their already low standards of living, the racial abuse and so on, you can readily understand how the capitalists manipulate things in order to exploit cheap labor. They took their up-to-date machinery and their new standards of production and this combined with the already cheap standard of labor they produce goods at a tremendous low rate—take China, take India, take Indonesia, take Korea and Latin America, take the forcible industrialization of the African masses who through poll and hut taxes and other forms of taxation are forced off their lands to become industrial slaves for the imperialists, and take the United States where the capitalists have an internal army of millions of Negro toilers who are no less exploited and on whose labor billions in profits are piled up.'

In March of 1928, the Fourth Congress of the Red International of Labor Unions (R.I.L.U.), took place at Moscow. I was a delegate at this Congress from the Trade Union Educational League of the U.S.A. representative of the Negro workers. For three weeks I heard and participated in discussing the problems which I have already related, and saw the tasks outlined for the workers' struggles. I could not help being tremendously impressed with how the problems of the workers were handled, especially how directly they were in interest of the workers, workers from every land and every race. The question of the Negro workers was taken up in some detail.

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... Unlike Amsterdam International and its Congresses—the world for the R.I.L.U. did not consist alone of America and Europe and of only the upper strata of the working class in these countries—the world for the R.I.L.U. extended throughout the whole geographical area of the earth into the colonial lands, and not only of the upper strata of workers, but to the lowest strata, the unorganized who are betrayed by the reformists and whom they refuse to organize even of white workers in Europe and America. The R.I.L.U. pointed out how the capitalists use the colonial workers against the workers in the capitalist countries, how they used the unorganized against the organized and therefore how the reformists betray the workers by their attitude on the colonial workers and to the unorganized workers, how the reformists were weakening the struggle of the workers against the capitalists. The R.I.L.U. had already established contact with the colonial workers through the Pan-Pacific Secretariat and the Latin America Secretariat and had made direct contact with the Negro workers of South Africa. The R.I.L.U. did not look down upon Negro and colored workers as despicable people as the Amsterdam International does. This was

how the R.I.L.U. was creating the real International and establishing International solidarity.

This brings me directly to the Negro question as taken up at the 4th Congress of the R.I.L.U. While discussing the activities of its sections in the U.S.A., France, Britain and South Africa and their tasks among the Negro workers, special attention was paid to the Negro workers. It was found, however, that there had been many weaknesses in these sections in their work among Negroes. It was necessary therefore to give consideration to the setting up of a special trade union committee of Negro workers. But long before the 4th Congress the Negro question had received serious attention in the Executive Bureau of the R.I.L.U. The Congress decided that the Executive Bureau should call a conference of Negro workers to work out plans to enliven work amongst Negroes. In July of 1928 it convened a Conference of delegates from countries with a Negro population who had come to the 6th World Congress of the Communist International. After careful consideration it was decided to create an International Trade Union Committee of Negro workers at the R.I.L.U. and charged it with the task of drawing Negro workers into the existing trade unions, of further creating new unions and of unifying the wide masses of Negro workers on the basis of the class struggle. This was started. We did much work, published bulletins and issued other materials, we stimulated work among Negro workers in the various countries. But of course sufficient was not done. During July of 1929 I was a delegate representing the Committee at the 2nd World Congress of the League Against Imperialism held at Frankfort, Germany, and while there took the opportunity to call a few meetings in the name of our Committee of all the Negro delegates who had come for the Congress of the League Against Imperialism (from U.S.A., West Indies and Africa). Aside from the special questions taken up at the Congress of the League, in our meetings held in the corridors of the meeting hall, we discussed the problems and the question of trade union organization among Negro workers. We decided that an *International Conference of Negro workers* for this purpose should be called. A Provisional Committee was elected for this purpose. This Conference today is the results of our work. I will not go into the details of how we carried on our work, of the difficulties encountered, these are already well known to many of you here and other facts will come out later. I want to go to the second part of my report and that is the question of the situation of the Negro workers under capitalism.

\* \* \* \* \*

## II.

Today our disguised slavery is forced labor in all parts of Africa, peonage and forced labor in the U.S.A. and the West Indies; chaingangism, compound life, enforced by pass laws, curfew regula-

tions, discriminations and racial restrictions of every kind, super imposed and made more "disguised" by religion and other dope through missionaries, preachers, Y.M.C.A. men and other dope peddlers.

Not satisfied with this they have drowned hundreds of thousands of natives in blood with their colonial troops and police wherever there has been the least resistance to this system. In the U.S.A. during the last 35 years over 3,000 Negroes have been alone lynched by burning and other means. Comrades, these are the facts. Are there more? Yes. Remember the bloody reign of King Leopold of Belgium in the Belgian Congo, the French imperialists in Central Africa and the Congo, the destruction of the Zulus in South Africa by the combined British and Boers; the shooting down of natives in Haiti by the hundreds by the U.S.A. marines, the transportation by the Portuguese of natives from East Africa as forced laborers, many of whom died on the way.

During the imperialist World War, France, England, Germany, U.S.A. used hundreds of thousands of Negro troops in their imperialist armies, and thousands were slaughtered on the altar of imperialism. Despite the hypocritical promises of "Equality, Fraternity and Liberty," "make the world safe for small minorities," "God Save the King's Land" and so on, since that war we see, our exploitation and oppression goes on in a more intensified manner and form under every imperialist power.

But during the war we learned some things. Many of us first of all learned the class nature of the imperialist war, that the war was fought for the imperialist powers, that they fought among other things to subjugate colonial lands, to further exploit colonial peoples. That white workers too were murdered (by each other) for the imperialists, we saw during the course of this war that the revolutionary workers overthrew capitalism in one country—in Russia—and that a Workers' and Peasants' state was set up and rules today. We have learned, comrades, that in order for us to gain our freedom we must also organize our forces for a struggle against imperialism and capitalism.

The fact that the imperialists setup racial barriers between black and white workers on the basis of chauvinism in order to divide the working class interest, forces us to fight harder for a united front of workers the world over, and by increasing our class consciousness, strengthen the revolutionary forces to fight to overthrow imperialism.

We are at this moment in a position to do this and have the forces on which we can base our work. The war created a big army of Negro workers, in South Africa, in West Africa, in the West Indies, in the U.S.A.—millions of Negro proletarians. It is the Negro workers brought up in capitalist industry (just as the white workers have been brought up), who find from bitter experience the need for struggle against capitalism, that have the stability,



the courage, the discipline and that are class conscious on which to effectively organize their forces. It is on the basis of the class consciousness of the Negro workers in the industrial centers who jointly with the agricultural workers (whom they must assist in organization) that contact must be made with the villages and peasant farms and join hands with the peasant toilers and lead a combined struggle against their oppressors. It is only these forces that can lead the struggle for the liberation of the whole Negro race.

\* \* \* \* \*

Now what are the prospects, what are the evidences of the growing class consciousness of the Negro workers throughout the world and their capacity to lead the struggles of the Negro race?

\* \* \* \* \*

In every capitalist country the workers are fighting against this capitalist crisis by street fighting and by mass demonstrations. There is a militant struggle of workers everywhere. The Indian revolution is rising, the Chinese workers are building a Red Army and have established a Soviet of workers and peasants in a large section of China. To this, notice must be taken of the struggles of the Negro workers. Big and serious struggles of the Negro working masses have taken place against capitalist exploitation in different parts of Africa, the West Indies and the U.S.A. during the last period, of which you will report on here.

*French Equatorial Africa.* This colony is especially exploited by the French militarists. The system of concessions made the native population practically the slaves of the French companies and the impossible conditions of living and of work led to the extinction of the natives. The population decreased by almost 75% during the French rule. The construction of a railway running from Brazzaville, the capital of the colony, to the seashore was an exceptionally heavy burden on the natives. The greed of the concessionaires who undertook the construction of the railway resulted in the death of about of about 20,000 natives during the eight years of construction (1921-1928). A revolt setting on fire almost the whole country broke out in November 1928 in connection with the new drafts of workers for the construction of the railway. The revolt continued for more than three months and considerable military forces had to be sent out to suppress it. The result of this was that the construction was very small and that attempts were made to substitute "coolies" imported from Indo-China for the native workers.

A serious movement of the natives exists also in Madagascar; the movement in May 1929 grew into a tremendous demonstration under the leadership of the Communist Party. Many demonstrators were arrested and brought before court which treated two of the Communist leaders especially harsh. One of them—Black—was sentenced to 5½ years, and the other one to 3½ years.

The most important branch of the industry of Guadeloupe, one of the West Indian Islands, belonging to France, is the sugar industry. In connection with the fall of prices on the world sugar market the capitalists intensified the exploitation of the workers in order to shift onto their shoulders the whole burden of the crisis. The workers answered with a big strike in February 1930. The strikers and the police fought pitched battles. Several workers were killed and many wounded. The revolutionary movement gained new force after the death of these workers. The French administration was obliged to call for police from the neighboring Island of Martinique in order to suppress the revolt.

Serious disturbances took place in Nigeria in December 1929, women workers playing a very important part in them. During the suppression of the disturbances by the soldiery 44 women were among the total number killed. The disturbances were a protest against the introduction of a head tax among the women. This new tax burden is a further step to confiscate the lands of the natives. Though the administration very quickly settled the affairs and even compelled the population to pay a very high contribution in compensation for (pretended) losses suffered by the Europeans, the situation is still dangerous and the tribal chiefs are obliged to ask for defense against their own tribesmen who understand quite well that their headmen had sold themselves to the enemy and were agents of imperialism.

The principal wealth of Gambia situated on the Western Coast of Africa are peanuts and oil palms. As oil produced from both these plants is very important for the margarine and soap industries it is quite easily to be understood why the colony is entirely in the hands of an international margarine concern, which is the undisputed boss of the whole territory. The workers of this colony are organized in the trade unions and when the manager of the company demanded their leaving it, a general strike was declared. The strikers, in spite of the terror practiced by very strong military detachments that had been concentrated in Bathurst, the capital of the colony and centre of the strike, did not surrender and the administration was obliged to recognize the workers' right for organization.

A very strong anti-imperialist movement exists in Haiti, the formally Independent Negro republic which is practically a colony of the U.S.A., owing to the acute agrarian crisis and directed against the American puppet—President Borno, a revolt broke out in the country in 1929. The United States sent large detachments of marine forces, airplanes, and cruisers to aid in suppressing the revolt. Though they succeeded, President Hoover thought it necessary to make some concessions. A special commission was created to investigate the causes of the revolt and at the same time the resignation of the President was promised. It is quite obvious that these concessions will not satisfy the workers of Haiti who will have

to take up arms again and again until they at last throw down the yoke of imperialism.

In South Africa serious struggles of the workers have been conducted. In the United States the Negro workers are fast joining the Trade Union Unity League (the revolutionary Trade Union center for all the workers of the U.S.A.).

Capitalism is in a severe crisis. The next steps are to organize the battles of the workers, we must here give consideration to all these questions. We must raise the signal of *Revolt*. We must point out how to organize to fight against class exploitation and race oppression, we must make it clear and declare that our struggles are a part of the international struggle against capitalism, we must organize our forces to this end, drawing from the experiences and lessons of our class brothers in China and India, in the capitalist countries and from the workers and peasants in the Soviet Union. We must give special attention to the question of the new imperialist war especially being designed against the U.S.S.R. and the use that the capitalists intend to make of Negro soldiers in this war. Our conference must give active leadership and support to the struggles of the Negro workers throughout the world and to do this we must indicate practical organizational steps and tasks. If we do this we will have gone a long way towards justifying our efforts and towards winning the Negro workers for the international class struggle against capitalism. Our battle cry must be: *Down with Imperialism!*



## ***Ethiopia***

*An Interview with Minister Teclé Hawariate, Ethiopian Delegate at Geneva, Sees Aid of Negroes as*

*"FAR-REACHING, POTENT AND POWERFUL"*

Coincident with the opening of the dramatic sixteenth session of the League of Nations at Geneva, Switzerland, on September 9th, where the Ethiopian Delegation began a political and diplomatic struggle in defense of the independence of its country, a conference of far-reaching significance was held between an American delegation and the Ethiopian representatives.

The conference was held with the Ethiopian Ambassador and Minister Plenipotentiary, *Bedjironde Teclé Hawariate*, and Charge D'Affaires of the Paris Legation of Ethiopia, *Ephrem Tewolde Medhen*. The Ethiopian representatives received the American delegation with the utmost cordiality and hospitality.

They left the morning session of the League and met with the delegation at their hotel, Hotel De Russe. Although in the midst of the busiest and perhaps most important diplomatic session of the League of Nations since the World War, the Ethiopian Ambassador let it be known that the conference was of such importance that he would give whatever time necessary to send a message to the American people.

The American Delegation consisted of William N. Jones, staff correspondent of the *Baltimore Afro-American*, James W. Ford, Communist leader, representing the Provisional Committee for the Defense of Ethiopia and who was on his way to meet with a group of well-known liberals in Paris in connection with a world movement for the defense of Ethiopia, and Benjamin Careathers of the League of Struggle for Negro Rights, of Pittsburgh, Pa.

### **U. S. Delegation Reports on Ethiopian Defense**

Following formal introduction, Mr. William N. Jones opened the conference by presenting a prepared list of questions and introducing James W. Ford, who outlined the aims of the visit of the American Delegation and the protest actions which had already been carried through in the United States and other parts of the world, particularly the actions of the Negroes in Harlem, Chicago, Cleveland and other parts of the U.S.A. He told of the splendid support which had been given by the Negro press in the U.S.A. He also told of sympathetic actions in behalf of Ethiopia, which were taking place among Negro people in South Africa, Paris, London, West Indies, etc.

Mr. Ford, appropriately analyzing the national aspects of the

Ethiopian situation—the struggle to maintain its national independence; pointing out that the Ethiopian question is not a separate, isolated, “African” question, but has world-wide importance, opened his remarks as follows:

“The struggle of the Ethiopian people to maintain their independence has aroused the sympathy of the whole world. The ideals which motivate the Negro masses to stand solidly behind Ethiopia are those of racial ties and the desire to aid a small nation whose independence, and national and economic existence is threatened by big powers and megalomaniac fascism, and this is seen not only in the case of Liberia and Ethiopia but in the case of a great nation like China, nations like Czecho-Slovakia and the Central and Latin American countries, Cuba, Haiti, etc.

“Our racial ties are remote but our mutual fight for national existence in a world of big bandit nations is clear and tangible and we stand ready to defend the long history of fine cultural and national growth of the Ethiopian people. So that Ethiopia, by maintaining its freedom, may have the possibility of progressive growth unhampered by the destructive forces of the so-called civilized nations. That is why, the Negro people in the United States pledge to defend Ethiopia against Italian fascism.

“We aim to arouse not only the Negro people but liberty and justice-loving people of all races to support this struggle.”

### Hawariate Replies

Mr. Hawariate is a small, dark-brown-skinned man who speaks with cool deliberation but with astute and penetrating decision. He is well-groomed and is an excellent representative of the Ethiopian people, measuring up with the best diplomats of Europe. Mr. Hawariate has a tremendous reserve of emotional energy which he uses effectively when necessary.

He plunged into the general statement showing that he was thoroughly familiar with American thought and opinion on his country's situation. Throughout he seemed to want to advise as to the broad scope of the Ethiopian question.

Calmly and deliberately he said: “It is not necessary for me to comment on our racial ties and the fact that we originate from the same land. Our common sympathies arise not only from racial ties but from our natural desire to see justice and fair-play for small nations. I am happy to agree with our friend, Mr. Ford, on this question. We can well appreciate the mutual feeling of interest American Negroes have in the crisis which faces us. We are thankful for what already has been done which has been powerful and effective.

“There is an unsolved question,” he said, and after a pause went on: “The case of Ethiopia and Italy brings before the whole world the question of a big nation against a small nation: it is a question of *justice* or *might*. The hour has come when it must be known once for all: Ethiopia has the right to maintain its independence; or is she to be condemned for being colored?”

## What Is the World Going to Do?

"The world has passed its sentiment morally, but it remains to be seen whether it is to be put into practice," he said. "In Africa there are only left Liberia and Ethiopia. The only specimen of an independent country remaining is Ethiopia; it remains expressive of the right of colored nations to independence."

At this tense and dramatic moment (and everyone in that room was tense and filled with emotion) Mr. Hawariate said emphatically:

*"That is the question!* All People must see the outcome of this question as the rights of *all* human beings, or, is it to be limited by the color of one's skin!"

Then Mr. Hawairiate said calmly and deliberately: "I understand your sympathies from both viewpoints. Our sympathies are naturally spontaneous. But let alone your sentiments, some who are alien (in race) feel for us."

## Compliments Our Activities in U. S. A.

"Your activities in the United States in our behalf are highly appreciated and I want to thank the American people not only for myself but for my people. I feel that it has been useful, beneficial and *powerful!*

"There are many factors," he said, "and we expect great sacrifices, but we have full faith in the outcome. This solidarity in the U.S.A. assures me of our final success."

## What More Can Be Done?

Considerable time was taken by Mr. Hawaraiate in discussion of practical methods of support to Ethiopia. He said: "You must now carefully study future methods to be undertaken to help Ethiopia. We have had propaganda, which is useful. We have had sympathizers to offer themselves as medical, military and technical units. We have had offers from all colors—white, brown, yellow and black.

"But what Ethiopia lacks is not men, we have sufficient for fighting purposes. In this regard we have never yet acceded in any way to Italy. What is really our problem? Ethiopia needs war materials and munitions, and medical and flying assistance is useful. If we are in need of finance it is only for that purpose and no other. We are limited in the money required for that purpose, compared to Italy. We are handicapped in the sense that Italy has unlimited access to war materials as she wishes.

"It is a question of armaments: here finance plays the whole role. The greatest help or contribution which American Negroes can render is on the financial side. There is not one American Negro that would not give his last penny for Ethiopia's cause. His motive for so doing is because he feels that Ethiopia symbolizes independence and national life. His benefit is not of a material but of an



idealistic nature: to show that colored people are just as much human beings as white people."

### **Warns Against Profiteers and Self-Seekers**

This question of finances, however, Mr. Hawariate stated, is one which should be handled with extreme care and caution.

"There is something which I am afraid of," he said, "if American Negroes contribute money *it should go for what it is intended*—to save the independence and national life of Ethiopia, and for no other purpose. But as you know, in the ordinary run of life such things look simple yet in the carrying out of them difficulties are encountered not only of a purely technical character, but in the handling of money, of a speculative kind.

"Therefore I want to warn that if the American Negro population gives, you must never forget that there are profiteers and speculators. It must be seen to that the money is utilized to help those intended. If this practical point is kept in mind, the plan will be beneficial. If the money, however, goes into the hands of speculators there will be regret on both sides." With these suggestions, Mr. Hawariate closed his remarks.

Mr. William N. Jones then put several questions to Mr. Hawariate.

*Question:* "Has the Ethiopian government, or any group with authority to do so, made connection with any group in the U.S.A. to raise funds for Ethiopian defense?"

*Answer:* Mr. Hawariate replied that to his knowledge, "No! My proposals are personal suggestions."

*Question:* "What is the attitude of the Ethiopian government to the recent declaration of Mussolini that nothing would satisfy him except domination of Ethiopia?"

*Answer:* "Ethiopia is a member of the League of Nations," he replied, "signatory to the League Covenant, which has been signed by every nation affiliated to the League. We only ask that this pact be put to work. But if the League proves itself powerless, we are prepared to defend ourselves. The Ethiopians have the same desire for independence other people have, and they also have the will to fight for it."

### **Praises Litvinoff**

*Question:* "What do you have to say to the support given Ethiopia by the Soviet representative? You should be informed that certain people in the U.S.A. claim that Mr. Litvinoff (at the time that he was presiding as chairman of the League Council at a previous session) and the Soviet government betray the interest of Ethiopia and that of colored people in general."

*Answer:* (Interjection by Mr. Medhen, Ethiopian Charge D'Affaires: "They are mistaken.") "I think that he (Litvinoff) spoke and acted right; not only Mr. Litvinoff but other representatives,

such as those of Denmark, Argentina and Spain have openly expressed their favorable stand. Mr. Litvinoff did not offend Ethiopia. What he speaks and does is sincere. I find him *genuine!*"

*Question:* "Is not the national interest of small nations like Czecho-Slovakia involved in the Ethiopian situation to such an extent that it is to the interest of all small nations to stand solidly behind Ethiopia?"

*Answer:* "The fact that Czecho-Slovakia and certain Balkan states sympathize with us (and others have expressed their support privately) shows that they feel themselves and their national independence involved."

# ***Imperialism Destroys the People of Africa***

*(A speech delivered by JAMES W. FORD at the International "Save the Children of Africa Conference, at Geneva, Switzerland, July, 1931.)*

*Mr. Chairman:*

I speak in the name of the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers and the Negro delegation here. We demand that the truth be told about African children. It must be said in the outset, however, that we expect nothing from this Conference. You have done everything to keep us from speaking, you have insulted the African delegate here by calling him a liar from this platform. You claim to aim at saving the children of Africa.

But if we examine the board of patrons and organizers of this Conference, we find them to be the same people are associated with plundering and exploiting the African colonies; they are members of the highest nobility, high colonial officers, industrialists, "labor leaders" of the Second International and labor ministers, archbishops, bishops, general and diplomats.

You explain that the time has come to save the children of Africa, but this is a hypocritical gesture invented because you fear that the African population that produces huge profits may die out and endanger the income of the imperialist coupon clippers.

This child question in Africa is to be adjusted not in the interest of the native population of the African continent, but with the deliberate object of strengthening imperialist exploitation. It is imperialist barbarism in the colonies, and in particular in Africa, that is the immediate cause of the terrible death rate among the children, as a result of which the whole population of Africa is faced with extermination.

Conferences of this kind try to conceal the fact that the dreadful fate of the African children is due to imperialist exploitation, similarly as the League of Nations and the International Labor Office are doing and have done with regard to forced labor and slavery in Africa while at the same time making fake reports and spreading lies about so-called forced labor in the Soviet Union. Imperialist exploitation is a means to keep the children of Africa in ignorance, exploit their youthful energies to exhaustion and to drive them to death. *There is no remedy without abolishing imperialist oppression and domination, the cause of the unspeakable misery and suffering of the African people!*

## **Child Mortality In Africa**

Since the Conference raises the question of child mortality, child labor and lack of education, we shall prove by facts that imperialist

oppression is essentially responsible for these conditions in Africa.

Child mortality in the African colonies is the direct result of foreign exploitation of the native population. The effects of this exploitation are disastrous. Whole districts are depopulated and devastated.

Malnutrition of mothers, lacks of sanitation and compulsory labor for mothers in advanced stages of pregnancy and immediately after child birth, explain the terrific death rate among babies in Africa. You speak here about diseases, etc., why don't the British "Labor" Party representatives here say something about the shooting down of native women by British troops in Nigeria? One French imperialist representative yesterday referred to it, but he did it hypocritically.

As general statistics are not kept in the agricultural and mining districts and on the plantations we shall have to use isolated figures that have been gathered from various sources and from different African districts.

In St. Louis, French West Africa, there were 594 deaths against 1,108 births (in 1928). In Rufisque, another French West African town, out of 1,197 babies born, 494 died. South Africa, which boasts of maternity protection, certain districts of Transvaal registered no less than 500 child deaths out of every 1,000 births (in 1924). In the districts of Grahamstown, mortality from 1904 to 1916 was so high that the births exceeded the deaths only in two years. In East London (South Africa), the death rate was 400 out of 1,000 children born. The Johannesburg mortality figures from 1922 to 1924 put the number of deaths at 564 per thousand.

Let me now make some quotations from a letter received by us from Johannesburg, dated May 20th, 1931:

"Parents through poverty and lack of knowledge are forced to allow their children to grow up as herdboys, nurses for European children and herdboys for rich white farmers, where they work for a heifer valued at 21 £ or sometimes, if fortunate, 22 £ for a period of twelve months, which means 2 pounds and 6 pence per month.

"In the time of Paul Kruger, heifers were then valued at 27 pounds or 28 pounds per head, and contracts were framed for 'Kaffir picanies' to work a whole year for one heifer, and Negroes being afraid of these whites and partly being forced to, simply agreed. Today it has become a tradition, and every Negro is proud of his son or her son serving a year or two for heifers. I myself actually served two years at the age of 13, very rough work for my age.

"The mothers work for ten shillings per month, from four o'clock in the morning till nine at night, with hardly any interval for food; so you may know how cruel and callous these oppressors are: Kaffir women must chop or hew huge blocks of wood and do unnecessary and tough work unfit for any woman to discharge.

"In the case of squatters, the whole family has to work for nothing but two acres a year at harvest. No schools are provided for squatters' children, not even the religious schools. Children grow up as wild beasts, uncreared, with rotten and scanty food, rarely any meat, sometimes once a month or none at all; they go around very ragged, barefooted and dirty, sleep in hovels with no doors or windows, in



ill health and no medical aid; thrashed for petty offences, such as spilling a pail of milk and for escaping from farms because of foul treatment.

"Illiteracy is rife, especially in the Transvaal where all educational institutions are controlled by the Missionary Societies. All children are taught the bible and catechism line upon line; they start to school at the age of 13 and 16 and then chosen for Confirmation after passing sub. B, sometimes Standard I. They are then forced to help their parents' church taxes, which are very high and unbearable."

—Signed: "V. B."

I could quote from a whole list of letters such as this, and you claim to have sent out questionnaires! As a result of food scarcity in Africa the children continue sickly and are a prey to contagious diseases. The wages of the workers are very low while the taxes of the farmers are exorbitant, and for these reasons their children are forced to work just as hard as parents.

As a result of insufficient nutrition child mortality rose to such an extent as to draw the attention of the imperialist exploiters to the fact that their reserve army of labor and natives for their imperialist armies were fast dwindling away. That is why this Confernece has been convened.

### **Extermination of Africans**

Wherever we look we see a dying population in most African colonies.

In 1910, the population of French equatorial Africa was about 9 millions; two years later, in 1912, their number had decreased to 7 millions; and in 1921 only 2.8 millions remained. Since then no more statistics on the number of natives in these districts have been published; the reason is, that a subsequent decline in the native population has been so alarming that the publication of statistics is probably not considered desirable. In Gabon, French Equatorial Africa, the native population slumped from 1,500,000 in 1911 to 300,000 by 1921. In Upperoghue, the death rate was 4,000 in total of 20,000 inhabitants. The population of Kenya declined from 2,700,000 in 1914 to 2,400,000 in 1924. Thirty years ago, the population of the British Sudan numbered ten million people; today they count only six millions. In the Belgian Congo the population used to be twenty millions, whereas at present very optimistic calculations put their number at seven millions; 17,000 natives died in the construction of the Ocean-Congo railroad by the French.

### **The Exploitation of Child Labor**

In all these colonies children, boys and girls, are compelled to find work because of the low wages earned by their parents, and because of the pressure of taxation. They are made to pay exorbitant taxes, as for example, in French Equatorial Africa; and for non-payment of taxes they are made to work. Other known instances show that the administration orders conscription of natives and puts them to forced labor, as for example, in the British Colony

of Kenya. In all these cases the children have to perform work for European managers, such as plantations, mines, road building, railroad construction which far surpasses their feeble strength. Child protection is altogether unknown in the African colonies.

When the Geneva International Labor Office recommended women and child labor protection for the colonies, the Belgian Government at once declared that maternity laws and infants' protection laws could find no application in the Belgian Congo, as the "local conditions did not allow of such." It may be said, however, that the International Labor Office had no intentions of protecting women and children in Africa, notwithstanding the fact that already at this Conference the representatives of this organization in the opening session have pretended to be interested in the children of Africa. In the Belgian Congo workers have a monthly "income" of 5 shilling, and the population has been reduced one-third yet the "Unilever" combine in this year of unprecedented crisis, was able to pay a 40% dividend to its shareholders!

The German Government, of whom it may be said, however, is merely trying to regain its right to exploit the African people, recommended to the Anti-Slavery Commission of the League of Nations that women and children should not be taken for forced labor more than 10 miles from their dwelling place; this proposal was rejected.

### **Children Burnt Alive**

The French imperialists who are now (1931), at the Paris Colonial Exposition, exhibiting all the various forms of wealth obtainable from their colonies, suppress the truth about the origin of the wealth that has been amassed by the exploitation of the colonial population. A significant illustration of how the so-called civilized nations treat the children of the natives is found in a book by M. Andre Gide, the French author. He writes of a district that is being depopulated by methods of the above description. In this district forest companies have acquired concessions and amassed immense fortunes.

"In the neighborhood of our encampment," says M. Gide, "a whole flock of children between 9 and 12 squat around a feeble grass fire all through the cold night.... These children have been marched from their villages with ropes around their necks; for six days they have been forced to work without pay and without food...."

Another passage in M. Gide's book states:

"We met a group of prisoners.... They numbered eleven, all of them tied together by means of a rope.... One of them carried nothing; he was a lad from 10 to 12 years old, frightfully emaciated and utterly exhausted from misery, hunger and want of sleep. From time to time his whole body shook and the skin of his stomach moved convulsively. His head was full of scabs, and in

place of the hair, there grew skin the like of which usually forms over wounds or scalded parts of the body. He seemed to have lost his smile forever."

And once again—"Three infants...valued at 7 francs each although the younger two barely count 13 years."

If these children should find their condition unbearable and should venture to protest against it, their fathers are tied to trees and then shot, as was clearly stated at a parliamentary session in 1927; a terrific massacre took place among their parents and five small children were chased into a hut and then burned alive.

### Government Decrees Forced Child Labor

In the Portuguese possessions in West and East Africa Government decrees permit, and even demand forced labor for private contractors. In Angola, ordinance number 148 in 1923, says that "women and children may be put to light work to secure labor for private contractors." In Nyasa, Portuguese East Africa, Government ordinance number 34 in 1922, reads as follows: "Male juveniles between 12 and 14 years of age may be put to light work." Fourteen year old children are already looked upon as able-bodied workmen.

In Angola, Professor Ross was able to observe that groups of children were employed on the railways and in the harbor, but were not given any pay for their work. In the Italian colonies (Somali) a regulation has been issued dealing with child labor. A child is to be paid a daily wage of 2 lire or barely 1 cent.

In the British colonies these forms of exploitation are even more dangerous, because they are partly legalized.

Archdeacon Owen reports some facts about Kenya in the *Manchester Guardian* of April 23, 1927: "In most cases my remonstrations against the unlawful conscription of women and children were admitted by the district officers, but the abuses were not stopped. However, it is common knowledge that we attached great importance to road building, and that the same time we let no means go by to separate the men from their wives and mothers, in order to employ them outside the native reservations. *The result was that women and children were unlawfully forced to do road building.*"

The following was reported about free child labor in the British Colony of Kenya: About 6,000 women and 12,000 children are employed on the European plantations, mainly with coffee picking, but also on the hemp fields, the manufacture of fuel, and in depots."

According to Buell, *NATIVE PROBLEMS OF AFRICA*, Vol. 1, Labor Inspectors have forced children of 8 and 9 years to break stones for European contractors; their daily task consisted of 7 cubic feet. In the coffee junking season the chiefs are put under pressure to send women and children to the plantations; there are examples where government officials made possible "an occasional supply of

child labor from the reservations." (MacGregor Ross, KENYA FROM WITHIN.)

### Education

Wherever child exploitation is employed we shall not be surprised to find that the whole educational system is subservient to this kind of exploitation. There has never been any universal education of children in the colonies; the question has narrowed down to one of educating the children for the aims and objects of imperialist exploitation. We must distinguish three types of schools which clearly show the nature of African educational system. First, the schools for the European children; they are of the modern type, where we find them, either in South Africa or Belgian Congo, in Tanganyika or French West Africa. It is a fact that all children of the whites are educated at a considerable cost and the natives are sweated to keep these white schools up. Here the children of the whites are taught prejudice, besides, being told that they are born to rule the natives. Next, the schools for the native chiefs. Schools of this type exist in the colonies. The children of the chiefs are trained to respect the whites and become obedient servants of the foreign rulers.

### Missions Support Forced Labor

For working natives, we have the mission schools where the children are hardly more than cheap hands for the mission stations and are kept in ignorance and obedience towards the whites. It is the missionaries' chief pride to furnish the white contractors with a fit staff of workmen.

In South Africa, close to 1,500,000 whites live next to about 4,500,000 natives. How are black people educated there in a country which claims that her natives are given an education?

In 1924 there were 4,665 schools for the European children in South Africa, where 336,459 children were trained; but the native schools numbered no more than 3,501, and the number of pupils trained in them was only 304,617. In 1927-1928 the cost for one European pupil was calculated at about \$100, whereas the educational budget for one native pupil provided a mere \$10.

In the Northern Sudan where the Mohammedan population keeps up a number of private schools, the native pupils count only 28,000 in all; and yet there are 300,000 of them of school age (*Al Maquattem*, Egyptian Daily, Cairo).

C. A. Smith states in his pamphlet that in 1925 there was one government school in North Rhodesia, two in South Rhodesia, five in Kenya, 19 in the Gold Coast and none in Nyasaland and Uganda. In the mission schools there were only 79,631 pupils of a total of 600,000 children of school-going age. In North Rhodesia there were 475 schools for 600,000 children. In North Rhodesia the number of children attending school was 14,000, in the Gold Coast 83,000.



## Negro Oppression In America

In the United States, the brutal oppression and exploitation of the Negro masses continues at an unheard of rate. The outstanding case in the United States today, that has brought forth international protest, is the frameup to "legally" lynch by electrocution eight Negro boys, mere boys between the ages of 14 and 20. These are the things and facts that this Conference is trying to conceal.

### How to Struggle Against Imperialism

The International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers points out to the toiling masses of Africa that this Conference has no intention of relieving the situation of the native masses and that it is only by an uncompromising, determined and ceaseless struggle against imperialism which is to be carried on by fighting for the following demands and conditions that their freedom can be obtained:

For the right of workers and peasants of Africa to organize; Freedom of Trade Unions and right of Assembly; for higher wages and better working conditions; a working day of not more than eight hours for adults, six hours for young people; for special labor protective legislation for young workers and women workers; for the complete abolition of all forced labor, contract labor and all other systems of disguised slavery; to drive out of their country all labor recruiters and tax collectors, refuse to pay hut poll and other taxation; abolition of all pass laws; leave with pay for mothers before and after child birth; abolition of hard and laborious work for women and children; free hospitals and dispensaries at the expense of the State; the introduction of compulsory unemployment insurance for all unemployed workers to be paid for at the expense of the State; grants to be given out to unemployed workers in case of sickness, accidents or death, free rent for all unemployed workers; free fuel, potatoes and milk for children of unemployed workers to be paid for by the State; organization of peasant leagues for the development of the agrarian revolution; self-determination, complete independence of all Negro colonies from imperialist rule; the complete evacuation of imperialist troops from Africa; the return of all confiscated land to the natives; against all forms of terror, lynchings, police and soldier massacres, against the imperialist war for which the young Negroes are being recruited; fraternize with the soldiers of the opposing armies in case of war; international solidarity with the "mother" countries, and all oppressed peoples; for the defense of the Soviet Union which is victoriously building Socialism, has completely eliminated racial antagonism left over from the Tsar, carried out in practice the right of self-determination for National Minorities.

Down With Imperialism! Long Live International Solidarity!  
*This is our Proposal!*

## ***The Struggle for Peace and the Independence of Ethiopia***

(A Speech delivered by JAMES W. FORD at the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, at Moscow, August, 1935.)

*Comrades:*

The American delegation is in complete agreement with the splendid report of Comrade Ercoli on the struggle against imperialist war and for the defense of the Soviet Union. It will greatly strengthen the struggle against imperialist war in all sections of the Communist International—the International which the Negro masses and oppressed nations see as *the International of Socialism, of national liberation*. With the imminent danger of war and fascism confronting the whole of humanity, not a moment can be lost in developing the broadest people's front against these twin monsters of finance capital.

I want to concentrate my attention on one point, Ethiopia.

Fascism in general, the open terrorist chauvinistic dictatorship of finance capital, instigates war for the enslavement of colonies and small nations and the destruction of the Soviet Union.

The threat of Italian fascism to invade the territory of the Ethiopian people is a menace; it threatens to plunge the world into a new imperialist war. What Italian fascism plans to do in Ethiopia is what German fascism plans to do *to small nations in Europe and the peoples in the colonies*. Hitler fascism wants to “civilize” and *divide the Soviet Union*. It is necessary therefore for us, in order to develop a militant fight against fascism, to understand the Ethiopian situation *for its own problems as well as for its world implication*. The struggle of the Ethiopian people, the last independent Negro state in Africa, in the fight to retain its independence has aroused a bond of sympathy among millions of toilers, black, white, yellow and brown, throughout the world. Numerous fully substantiated reports of waves of indignation against the invasion of Ethiopia by Mussolini, are coming out of Italy, giving details about strikes, peasant actions, people's protests and other spontaneous acts of resistance, under the leadership of the Communist Party joined by Socialists. In the United States the American Negroes, denied the most elementary democratic rights, are seething with indignation against this attack on the Ethiopian people. In like manner, the toiling masses from South Africa to the north of Africa, groaning under the heavy yoke of imperialist domination, are awakening to the call of battle for defense of the independence of Ethiopia.

I believe that the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International should greet these magnificent actions, and especially those of our Italian Communists, Socialists and trade Unionists in Italy.

Ethiopia, it is true, is a feudal state, under the rule of powerful native feudal lords. But we fully agree with the remarks of Comrade Ercoli that the war of Ethiopia against Italian imperialism must be regarded as a national (liberation) war. But Japan as well as other imperialist nations are attempting to utilize it for their own imperialist aims. The international proletariat must regard it as *a just war*, as a national *defensive war*, and must act in *a corresponding manner*.

All the so-called great nations, *Great Britain, France, Italy, Germany and Japan* are trying to maneuver at the expense of the independence of the Ethiopian people. This increases the danger that Italy's war against Ethiopia may take the form of an imperialist war between two powers or groups of powers and therefore contains in itself the direct danger that it may be turned *into an imperialist war on a more or less considerable scale*.

The whole course of diplomatic negotiations and numerous maneuvers that are now taking place in the Ethiopian situation is a *typical example of "slipping into imperialist war."*

Great Britain which enslaves nearly half the colonial peoples of the world is the most deceitful offender against the Ethiopian people. Did not England secretly promise Italy after the world war a share in Ethiopia? Does not England now control great territories on the head waters of the Red Sea—the route to her territories in India, and also East, north and South Africa?

Japanese imperialism in its strategy and aims of imperialist expansion is attempting to exploit the so-called "colored races" for her war policy. If we weakly support the Ethiopian people in their struggle, we make it easier for Japanese imperialism, the same Japanese militarism which is now enslaving the Chinese people in Manchuria and north China and the Korean people, killing those who fight for their freedom; this same Japan tries to cheat the Negro masses by pretending to be "defenders of Ethiopia". We have to warn both, the Negro and the white masses of the dangers of the various angles of reactionary race theories.

We in the United States are having to struggle against the Pacific or Pro-Japanese movement among the Negro people. We also find that Japanese imperialists are following this policy in the Philippine Islands, trying to link the independence movement of the Philippine people with her aims for expansion.

Because of these international connections the Ethiopian situation is not a separate, isolated, "African" question, but has world wide importance.

I believe it is useful to indicate briefly the role of United States imperialism in the Ethiopian situation. In the hey-day of colonial

expansion, in the latter part of the past century, Africa was torn to bits among the imperialist powers. Britain, France, Germany, Portugal and Italy gobbled up ninety per cent of the black continent. Only Ethiopia which had retained its unity, its culture and its governing power for centuries, was able, through heroic and successful battles, to retain its independence.

Although late on the scene, the United States also has imperialist aims in Africa. In 1927 she began to maneuver in Ethiopia. The Anglo-American Oil Company (a subsidiary of the Standard Oil Company) was given a concession by the Ethiopian government to exploit oil territory. In 1928 the White Engineering Company of Wall Street received a 20 million dollar contract to build a dam on Lake Tsana, whose control would determine the flow of water to irrigate the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan cotton region. Both England and Italy also want Ethiopia for the growing of cotton. Their interests are therefore in conflict with the Southern cotton interests in the United States.

The American people particularly the Negro masses are against war on Ethiopia, and its enslavement. But the house of Morgan was the main financial agent for the floating of Italian government loans in the United States of approximately one billion dollars. Certain sections of American finance capital are therefore for the support of Italian fascism, for plunging the world into a new world war and for attacking the Soviet Union. These facts as well as many other imperialist involvements account for the sending of representatives of the United States State Department to Ethiopia. It should also be remembered that Italy gets munitions from the United States as well as raw materials and manufactured products, such as oil, coal, iron, chemicals and automobiles which are convertible to military uses.

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Several agreements extending as far back as 1906 and up to the recent Rome Pact have been made between Great Britain, France, and Italy giving the latter the right to invade the territory of Ethiopia. How have the Italian people responded to this situation?

Never before has the Mussolini government had to face such active mass unrest. The united platform of the Communist and Socialist parties of Italy mobilized anti-fascist and anti-war resistance to Mussolini's economic and war measures. Maximalists, anarchists and Catholics as well as other workers were drawn into this united front. For some time before the mobilization for the Ethiopian invasion, peasants in scores of places began to fight against higher taxes, foreclosures, price fixing and fascist political oppression. *Demonstrations were held in the southern part of Italy, at times reaching the proportions of revolts.* Outstanding demonstrations took place in Lombardi and Piedmont as well as the north of Italy.

So deeply has the desire to assist the Ethiopian people against



Italian fascism seeped into the political consciousness of the American Negro people, that in their own struggle for freedom against American imperialist oppression, they have raised high the cry of solidarity with their Ethiopian brothers. In the outbreak of the Harlem Negroes on March 19th in New York, although fighting against the bitterest poverty and misery imposed upon them by the American ruling class, the American Negroes were also expressing their hatred of Italian fascism and its plans for war against their Ethiopian brothers. They went through the streets crying, "Down with Mussolini!" This wave of indignation is now extending into broad united front struggles throughout the United States. On August 3, more than a hundred thousand Negro and white workers, including many Italian workers of New York, in a united front movement initiated by the Provisional Committee for the Defense of Ethiopia, the League Against War and Fascism and the Harlem Communist Party held a monster demonstration in the Negro section of New York, against the invasion of Ethiopia by Italian fascism. The masses in this demonstration also cried "Down with Nazi German fascism", "Free Ernest Thaelmann".

I believe that it is of sufficient interest to tell the delegates of this Congress of the experiences we had in the United States with certain Negro nationalist organizations in building up the united front struggle for the defense of Ethiopia who under the influence of demagogic propaganda and reactionary race theories would have nothing to do with the white people; they were people willing to work with Negro Communists in the united front but not with white Communists. It was under these conditions that the Negro Communists helped to initiate the united front. There we began to expose the reactionary race theories, and to bring forward a clear line of joint struggle of all anti-fascist forces for the national liberation movement. We were able to break the suspicion of some of the more sincere elements within this united front against the Italian and other white workers. We arranged to send two Negro delegates to a conference of Italian workers in New York where the question of Ethiopia was discussed. They went to this conference but still suspicious of the Italian workers to such an extent that they took along with them weapons to be used in case the Italian workers would attack them. Our Italian comrades, however, received these Negro delegates very cordially in such a manner that they were thoroughly impressed with the sincerity of the Italian workers and reported back to the united front committee in Harlem that these kind of Italian workers should be drawn together with them. It was because of this and the other activities of the Negro Communists in this united front that we were able to build up the broad united front, anti-fascist, anti-war demonstration in Harlem on August 3, of Negro and white people.

Another idea that is developing among the Negro people in the United States is the idea of the American Negroes especially ex-

service men forming a volunteer army to go to fight in Ethiopia. While we support and help all serious movements for the defense of the independence of the Ethiopian people, we have indicated in the Negro masses in America that the main problem in this connection is that their own liberation must be linked up with broad protest demonstrations for the defense of the Ethiopian people, and by extending the anti-imperialist front in the U.S.A. render more practical aid to the Ethiopian people. The March 19 outbreak in Harlem has brilliantly shown what powerful reserves exist among the Negroes in the fight against imperialist war, fascism and the enslavement of small nations and colonial people.

We must also make it clear to everyone that what Mussolini fears most is the rebellion of the Italian workers and peasants against his plans for war on Ethiopia and that to raise the cry of all Negroes against all whites is to play into the hands of Mussolini's campaign of race hatred. The best allies of the people of Ethiopia are the enemies of Italian fascism. And the bitterest enemies of Mussolini in Italy are the revolutionary toilers led by the communists. They, more than anyone, want to destroy fascist rule in Italy. The Italian toilers know that the victory of Italy in Ethiopia would mean a victory for fascist dictatorship. The further enslavement of Italian people; and that therefore a fight must be conducted as Comrade Ercoli has indicated in his report and which the Communist Party is carrying out, for the military defeat of the Italian bourgeoisie—against the banks, finance capital, all of those who get rich out of war—for bread and peace for the Italian toilers. By rallying millions of toilers of all races in support of Ethiopia we can inspire the Ethiopian people so that they will help strike the vital blow against Italian fascism.

Mussolini and his fascists boast of maintaining the best heritage of the Italian people. They claim to preserve Italy's "honor" for the defeat in 1896. But it is the Italian toilers of today who are bearing forward the traditions of the Italian toilers of 1896. At that time labor and peasant insurrections against this previous invasion of Ethiopia opened up the gates for a wave of Socialist activity in Italy. Today the Italian toilers under the leadership of the Communist Party of Italy can maintain this heritage by opening up the way for communism in Italy, by defending the independence of the Ethiopian people. Because as Karl Marx has said "no nation can be free that enslaves another nation." What can we do to help further the struggle for the defense of the Ethiopian people?

In all countries in all working class organizations trade unions, workers' clubs, fraternal organizations, cooperatives, churches, etc., etc., we can build up "Hands Off Ethiopia" Committees. The central task of these committees should be to develop the widest movement among the people against the attack on Ethiopia; to mobilize the masses to stop the shipment of troops, munitions and military freight to Italy's theatre of war. None of the imperialist nations

want to help the Ethiopian people. We should encourage the arming of the Ethiopian people for their defense. Special efforts should be made to organize the Italian emigrants in the United States, France and Belgium for the defense of Ethiopia and also to assist the revolutionary movement inside Italy. The revolutionary workers in Great Britain should make every effort, using the parliamentary tribune, to unmask British imperialism.

The British communists should also help to further develop the movement which is now growing among the Negro population of London and in the British Colonies. Our French communists, from the tribune of the broad Peoples Front in France, should expose the hands of French imperialism in the Ethiopian situation and develop a broad movement in defense of the Ethiopian people.

In the United States we will take every practical measure to render material and moral aid and to clear up demagogic racial issues raised to mislead the masses in the Ethiopian situation, and to broaden the Provisional Committee for the defense of the Ethiopian people to include all sincere fighters, white and black, against fascism and war.

Comrades, already in this Congress we have heard reports of the heroic actions of our Japanese comrades under the leadership of the Communist Party of Japan in defense of their Chinese brothers. We take great pride in these actions and we believe that our Italian comrades will continue to emulate our Japanese comrades.

In all like manner we have viewed with joy and Bolshevik pride the long heroic struggle of the great Chinese people led by the great Chinese Communist Party against the imperialist invasion of China. I believe from these great acts of heroism and examples of struggle that the Ethiopian people and indeed the Negro people everywhere must learn and are learning as we have seen from the report of our South African delegate that only by valiant, militant, uncompromising struggle against imperialist war and fascism, in solidarity with their class brothers of all races can their freedom be won and the barbarism of fascism and war be erased from the face of the earth. We declare that the liberation and freedom of the Negro people can only be achieved through struggle to abolish all oppression of man by man, to abolish all reactionary forces, to defend the Soviet Union, to overthrow world capitalist imperialist domination.

At this time when the politics of bloody Italian fascism is to enslave and destroy the independence of small nation and colonial people, when Japanese imperialism holds large portions of China under her iron heel, when German fascism is ready to plunge the whole world into a new war to subjugate small nations like Czecho-Slovakia and attack the U.S.S.R., when American imperialism oppresses a nation of Negro people and holds in subjugation a whole series of colonial people such as the Filipinos, the Cubans, the Porto Ricans, Hawaiians, etc., etc., we can contrast the policies

of the Soviet Union where national minorities have been liberated, where the freedom of the peoples grows, and whose peace policy coincides with and corresponds to the aims of the world toilers for the defense of the rights of small nations, with the principles of Marx and Lenin, now under the leadership of the Communist International.



# *For the Independence of South Africa*

By JAMES W. FORD

*(A Report to the International Trade Union Committee of  
Negro Workers, Hamburg, Germany, August, 1931.)*

The South African native masses groan under the yoke of oppression and exploitation of British imperialism and the local white bourgeoisie. Mountains of grievances are piled up against ancient, colonial, and semi-colonial robbery, plunder and oppression. The British imperialists and the white South African bourgeois rulers control the principal industries, mining, manufacturing, railroad enterprises, agricultural production and the export trade. They rob the country by squeezing the life blood out of the native masses. They squeeze billions of pounds out of South Africa each year. They are crushing the already slave conditions of the natives down to the breaking point. They are doing this in order to keep up their super profit-making and to push the burden of the fall in price of goods, the shrinkage in the export trade, the whole burden of the economic crisis down upon the backs of the native toilers. The white bourgeois State is increasing vicious legislative measures against the natives like the Riotous Assemblies Act; and they are bringing on worse serf conditions with laws like the Hertzog Native Bills. At the same time the South African bourgeois parties (The South African Party and The Nationalist Party) and the British imperialists are more openly and closely joining together against the natives under the policy of complete unity of all bourgeois forces in South Africa and at London against the natives. This policy was outlined and dictated at the recent imperial Conference at London where British imperialism strengthened her control over the "Dominion". When natives fight against their slave and serf conditions, they are met by the police and soldiers of the bourgeois State with clubs and guns—at Johannesburg Demonstration against unemployment, at the Durban boycott Demonstration; at the Dingaans Day Demonstration. The imperialists with their bourgeois state mean to keep up the poverty and backwardness of the natives, to obstruct their advancement in every way and to continue their policy of mass extermination of native people. British imperialist supremacy is the basis of the endless suffering of the native masses. Only by struggling against British imperialist supremacy and white bourgeois rule can the natives gain their independence and establish self-determination for the native people; the trade union organizations must stand in the forefront of this struggle.

It is our aim here to outline the tasks and role of the native

proletariat in the struggle in South Africa. But in order to have a clear view we must give a brief picture of the South African background.

### **Coming of the Imperialists to South Africa**

Who are these robbers who have come to your country? How came British imperialist domination and white bourgeois rule in South Africa? What have they done there? And what are the tasks of the native proletariat in the struggle to better their daily conditions, protect themselves from physical and moral extermination; and to assist the struggle to kick out these robbers?

The Europeans came to South Africa at a very early date. They came professing to consolidate the country, for its growth, advancement, and to better the conditions of the native masses. But in reality their aim was 1) to make huge profits through the port of entry and off the marauding traders, 2) the traders (the Dutch East India Company, etc.) aimed to gobble up everything they could that would bring a pound or a dollar through cheating and robbing the natives, 3) to drive the natives off their land and to take the best and richest for their own selfish use, 4) and, instead of the advancement of the natives, to degenerate them morally and physically, squeezing every drop of blood out of them, by slavery and serfdom. This we shall show.

The Europeans settled at Captown and robbed the country through trading and marauding. The British and Boers began to break the power and resistance of the natives for the control of their lands by the defeat of the powerful Zulus under Dingaan in 1838; they forced a Treaty, taking the best and richest land around Natal. The whites then used a policy of "divide and rule" and set up civil war between the tribes which all but broke the power and resistance of the natives and gave the whites easy sailing. In 1879 the Zulus were again defeated. Meanwhile "Her Majesty's Government" at London instituted a series of ruthless campaigns in the Capetown region, breaking completely the power and resistance of the Amaxosa, or "Kafirs". She broke up their tribes, confiscated their lands and left them in a frightful condition of economic dependency and slavery. The Basutos in like manner had their lands taken. In the Transvaal, the best upper lands of the natives were taken; they drove them into the "locations" and reserves of the lowlands which were most unhealthy regions and which were already overcrowded; or they drove them into the European owned farms. In 1884 the British Government at London gave independence to the Transvaal and the Orange Free State under the whites, with absolute disregard for the natives, their rights and their conditions. In 1885 every inch of even the last "locations" were gone from the natives. Then set in more bloody British imperialist and white bourgeois rule and reign.

## General Condition of Natives in South Africa

There are in the Union of South Africa 5,277,023 Natives (Negroes); 1,738,937 Europeans; 761,623 Colored, Asiatics, and others (over 500,000 of these are colored); a total of 7,777,583 inhabitants. The natives therefore are 67.7% of the entire population.

The Union consists of Capetown, the Orange Free State, Natal and Transvaal, having a total of 417,917 square miles; of this the Europeans own 260,000,000 acres and the natives own 40,000,000 acres.

Four and a half million natives live on the "land", two and a half million of these live in the reserves and "locations", the remaining two million live on European owned farms. Even a bourgeois writer says that the masses of natives on the reserves are living at the starvation point, and those on European owned farms are below even this. Each year the needs of the natives increase, while taxes for cattle dipping and other charges drive the able-bodied men to the cities as wage-earners. In the Herschel district some 40,000 natives consumed on an average of £3 per year and one half of this had to be earned in the cities by the able-bodied men and brought back to the reserves. By spending their time in the cities the able-bodied men are lost to the reserves, resulting in lower production in the reserves, then comes the drought with no measures against it, then as the Europeans artificially force up land values the natives are pushed off the reserves into the already overcrowded "locations". The struggle for food is fierce. The death rate is high.

The infantile death rate in 1924 in one of the Transvaal regions was found to be over 500 and is on the increase now. Health department reports show that typhus is prevalent throughout native regions; scurvy coming from poor nourishment is also prevalent; in 1929 in Zululand malaria "was most devastating". A careful investigation in the Grahamtown district for the period from 1904 to 1916 showed a very high infantile death rate, births exceeding deaths in only two of the twelve years. About the same time in East London it was 400 out of a thousand. In Johannesburg in 1922-1924 the infant death rate was "enormously high", 565 out of a thousand. At Pietermaritzburg in 1929 eleven infants out of 83 born, lived. In one Reeftown recently every infant born, died.

In the European owned farms "native labor is bred" in the low fever stricken regions, and held to be drawn on when big crops come. The natives are otherwise contracted to work for 180-day periods, 14 days on and 14 days off. This spacing of their time is done not only to keep them from going to the towns, but to spread their time over a longer period, and they are not paid for the time in between. Women and children are bound to the farms for 365 days a year. In Transvaal, on some of the farms, often no

wages at all are paid, where wages are paid they are as low as 2 or 3 shillings per month, with cast off clothing, refuse and other pieces of animals killed for the master's needs, thrown in. In reality and actual practice the natives are nothing more than serfs, semi-serfs and slaves.

In the Transvaal in 1929 only £ 96,000 was spent for native education while £ 3,000,000 was spent for European education; there are usually only two or three schools for 20,000 native children. In the Union in 1928 there were 324,706 native students in school up to the fourth grade, everything above fourth grade is considered "higher Education", but in reality there is no higher education for the natives. For the training of natives in these schools the state grants only £ 340,000 yearly. During 1928 there were 342,033 European children in school; the state grants an average of £ 7,000,000 yearly for their training. It is clear under these conditions that everything is being done in health neglect, in lack of education, in industry and in agriculture to keep the natives from advancing. One white South African puts it quite bluntly: "It becomes a question of preservation of white civilization. If we want to hold our own we must exterminate the natives."

### **Imperialist Robbery — Development of Native Proletariat**

With the discovery of minerals natives were forced into the mines, and with this began the growth and the development of a native proletariat. But the great mineral wealth, and profits from industrial and agricultural products go to the British imperialists and the white bourgeoisie. From the time that gold was first discovered an endless flow of this precious metal has poured into the coffers and banking houses of the white rulers and foreign imperialists, principally Great Britain. From 1868 to 1929 £ 1,005 million of gold was produced; from 1884 to 1929 229,051,118 fine ounces was refined (40% of the gold produced by the entire world during this period). The value of all other minerals produced since 1884, including diamonds, coal, copper, tin, etc., was over £ 405 million. Diamonds was first in value at £ 294 million; coal was second in value at £ 84,062,894; the total mineral production since earliest times has been valued at £ 1472 million. The value of the manufactured products for South Africa, since 1911 has been over £ 2½ billion.

Foreign trade is one of the most important items and sources of income for the bourgeoisie. From 1906 to 1929 the export trade was £ 1,900 million.

In the mining industry since 1922 an average of 241,445 natives have worked each year. They received an average of £ 8½ million in wages or £ 29 for each worker. During the same time 35,386 Europeans received £ 8,000,000 yearly or an average of £ 200 per worker; the bosses took over £ 20,000,000. In 1918 the total income



of the mining industry was £ 47,737,738 of this £ 18½ million went as wages for all the workers, the natives receiving £ 7½ million for this; the net proceeds to the bosses were £ 22,000,000. Or take 1928. The mines earned £ 66,406,372, of this 20 million went for wages; less than £ 9 million went to 321,087 natives; over £ 10 million went to 38,000 Europeans; the bosses put away £ 46½ million.

These are enormous figures, and while it may be difficult for the average native worker to grasp the full significance of them, still it is important for him, carefully to study them in order to know who the robbers are and to raise his class consciousness, understanding that his "purpose" in life is not to be a slave for the exploiters, (as he is taught by their agents, preachers, etc.) but that it is his duty and task to struggle to overthrow the robbers and oppressors and help to organize the distribution of the wealth to toilers and workers who produce it.

These figures show that not only the huge profits made by the capitalists and the imperialists, but the super wages paid the European workers is done at the expense of the native workers. The wages of the upper sections of white workers is sometimes 600% and usually 400% higher than the wages of the native workers. Even the Federated Chamber of Industry is forced to admit that the wages paid the European workers is due to, and dependant upon, the employment of large numbers of native workers. The white worker in South Africa, however, is fast losing his favored position. The bosses are not only bringing natives in as unskilled laborers but they are using them as semi- and skilled workers, in many cases displacing the whites. The position of the white workers is becoming worse. Their attitude to the native worker only help the bosses. The conditions of both black and white are being lowered. The wage of a semi-skilled native worker in Durban is not more than £ 3 per month, usually only £ 2½. The cost of maintaining a native family, even according to state figures is 6/10 per month. In wide sections of the mining fields there has not been an increase of wages for the natives for over 30 years.

Compound life of the native workers is most terrible. It is worse than herding cattle into pens, conditions of this kind are worse than slavery, the "Nigger" should be ruled with a Sjambok (a whip) they say, and in the mines the whips are used freely every day. These conditions should not be endured by any human being.

The natives through taxation are forced from the reserves by the thousands to the towns to earn a living. Being unfamiliar with city conditions and industrial life they are forced into competition with the workers already there, which lowers the wages of all the workers. There is no trade union organization to bring the workers together to fight the bosses. The living level of the native workers can be judged by the fact that all they own or expect to own is a blanket, and perhaps a few cooking things. They have a little rice

or some dried fish to eat. By lying figures the imperialists try to show that unemployment does not affect the natives. But it is only through the tribal habits, of sharing and dividing food that the unemployed natives receive any relief and native unemployment is disguised. Also, despite the insistence of the mine-owners that few workers are hurt by the negligence of the owners in providing safety devices, still figures show that a very small item is spent by the mine-owners for the safety of the mines, some mines have been allowed to run so many years without repairs that "costs of repairing them now is prohibitive". The main difficulty and weakness of the native proletariat is the lack of Trade Union Organization, especially in mining and the most important and basic industries.

### **Tasks of the Native Proletariat of South Africa**

In 1930 there were 354,330 native workers in the mining industry; constituting 90% of the workers in this industry. There are over 125,000 native workers in the production or manufacturing industries, constituting around 65% of the workers, in transportation there are around 40,000, constituting about 35% of the railroad workers. In the lesser trades and crafts, like clothing, bakeries, food, etc., there are a few. In all the industries of South Africa the native workers constitute the vast majority, around 75%, the other 25% are largely the favored whites. In agriculture there are around a half million native workers, with a sprinkling of whites.

The first and foremost task of the class conscious workers of South Africa is the organization of the workers in these basic industries—mining, manufacturing, transportation, and the agricultural workers. The fundamental weakness of the South African workers is the lack of organization in these industries. These industries must be organized on the industrial basis of organization, that is, one industrial union for each industry and for all the workers of that industry. These unions must be class-struggle unions, energetic organization must be carried on throughout each industry on the shop basis of organization, factory committees, shop delegates, pit committees (in the mines), action committees and strike committees. The setting up of these committees must be done against all reformists, against all talk about class collaboration, against any cooperation with the bosses, against reformists like Kadalie and Ballinger, against all reformist meddlers. These committees should become real, live, militant organs of the workers, fighting against the bosses for the improvement of the conditions of the workers.

Another task of the factory committees must be the organization of self-defense groups in order to guard the workers against the attacks of the bosses and their police. Self-defense corps often will have to guard meeting places, defend picketers, etc. Defense corps must have the closest cooperation of all the workers.

On this basis and fighting for the interests of all the workers re-

ardless to race the Trade Unions must become mass organizations functioning throughout the country, a real revolutionary trade union center unifying all the workers of South Africa—Europeans, Colored, Indians, etc., for revolutionary struggle. It must fight for the following demands and conditions:

1. For the right of the workers to organize, for the complete freedom of trade unions, or the right of assembly.
2. For equal pay for equal work (Native with Europeans) for men, women and youth.
3. For an increase in wages. (In mining there has not been an increase in 30 years.)
4. For a working day of not more than 8 hours for grown ups, 6 hours for youth. Introduction of 6-hour working day in dangerous work, like for example, minning.
5. For compulsory weekly rest days and annual holidays with full pay.
6. For insurance against unemployment, sickness, accident; for old age pension, etc., all to be paid for by the state.
7. For the complete abolition of all forced labor, contract labor, and systems of bondage.
8. For special demands and rights for the Portuguese natives already imported to South Africa.
9. Away with the compound system.
10. Away with pass restrictions and curfew laws.
11. For abolition of all racial barriers, color bars and caste systems.

In addition, there are a thousand and one other demands in South Africa for the improvement of the life of the workers such as providing of toilets, workers' inspection supervision, especially in the mines where the danger to the life of the workers is great.

### **Other Tasks**

The most important task of the trade union movement of South Africa is the development and training of native trade union leaders, who must be drawn up right out of the shops, factories and pits. The most militant, active, class-conscious workers must come forward to lead their fellow workers. Another task is the building of a trade union Press, issuance of leaflets and pamphlets in native languages and finally close contact must be established with the revolutionary International labor movement.

### **Agricultural Workers**

The class-conscious workers in the cities and industries must help their brother agricultural workers on the plantations and farms, organize to fight against serf and slave conditions, the forcing of the natives off the farms with taxation, against compulsory labor,

against spreading their work time. Contact must also be made with the peasant toilers.

On the basis of the many grievances and the deplorable conditions of the workers, and the growing offensive of the bosses against the native workers, imminent class battles are ahead. Careful attention must be given therefore to strike tactics, the preparation and leadership of strikes.

The South African proletariat must not forget and must keep it ever before them, that the full and complete betterment of their conditions, that full and complete protection of the interests of all workers, that the achievement of self-determination for the natives and the setting up of a Native Republic for the organization of the country on a Socialist Basis, cannot be had before British Imperialist supremacy and white bourgeois rule is destroyed. You must build powerful revolutionary trade unions. You must accept the guidance and leadership of the Communist Party, the only party of the working class and oppressed millions of South Africa.



## ***Build the Peoples Labor Party***

*To Answer La Guardia-Tammany Police Attacks in Harlem*

*(Speech delivered by JAMES W. FORD to an emergency membership meeting of Harlem Division of the Communist Party, Monday, May 25, 1936.)*

*Comrades:*

This emergency meeting of our Party division has been called to discuss some immediate questions of political policy and organizational activity. This emergency rises because of the recent turn of events in Ethiopia and the wave of lynchings throughout the country. The people are indignant because of the occupation of Addis Ababa by the Italian fascist hordes and their subsequent mass execution of the Ethiopian population, and the attacks of Tammany police on their civil rights. On Monday last the police shot one, beat a Negro woman, rode down people on the sidewalk and broke up a street meeting through the anti-noise law. This so-called rioting was similar to the events of March 19th. But in some very important respects it took on new and significant developments.

The City Hall and the Tammany-controlled police department have concentrated hundreds of provocative police in Harlem.

We are faced with organized attack, such as face the entire working class and the people throughout the country, that is, the struggle against war and reaction, the building of a broad united front of the people to meet these attacks. Of similar importance to us and the people in this community is the reign of terror in Puerto Rica and Cuba and the struggle of these people for independence.

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Since Comrade Browder's speech in Madison Square Garden last Wednesday we are able to understand much more clearly how to carry out our Party tasks in line with the general political trends in the country, especially the changes which have taken place since the November plenum of the Central Committee. This, however, is just an emergency meeting. We have already done much work to build a Peoples Labor Party movement in Harlem.

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The occupation of Addis Ababa and the indignant reaction of the masses here show how closely tied up we are with the immediate issues of fascism and war, and we are duty bound to act in an adequately corresponding manner. The Ethiopians' struggle for national liberation and the fight of the Puerto Rican and Cuban

peoples on local immediate issues have aroused the fighting qualities of the masses throughout Harlem. I shall not deal at length with the issues of Puerto Rica as Comrade Santiago, our chairman and lower Harlem Division committee member, has dealt very adequately with this question.

Mussolini struts and boasts about his so-called military and political victory in Ethiopia. But he is in difficulties, which make it favorable for his defeat, the onward emancipatory struggle of the Ethiopian people and the preservation of peace in the world. More and more we are able to see that the Ethiopian question could not and cannot be localized. The so-called victory of Mussolini increases his difficulties but what is more, increases the danger of war on a world scale as never before. Herein, therefore, lies the significance of the struggle "to keep America out of war by keeping war out of the world".

Allow me comrades to give you a few simple illustrations. First of all, Mussolini needs money to exploit Ethiopia; he must have loans. Reliable sources (although he tries to hide this fact) show that the gold accumulation of the Italian fascists has considerably diminished, which places his financial position in terrible straits, and makes it difficult, if not financially impossible, for him to follow up his gains.

Mussolini must feed his army of occupation as well as face the demands of soldiers to return home. The population will also have to be fed. It is singular, and another tragedy for the Ethiopian people, that during the whole of the war very little work has been done in the fields; feeding the Ethiopian army was a strain on the food supply for the population as a whole. *A conquering army will have to feed the people or fight the people.*

Moreover, Mussolini's war in East Africa, which he claims is finished, will not solve the problem of so-called over-population and of unemployment in Italy as he promised the masses. Fascist Italy will have difficulties sending the unemployed out to East Africa as colonizers. Mussolini promised in view of the limitation of Italian immigration to America and South America, that this would be solved by colonization in East Africa. I need not describe to you the practical problems regarding climate and adaptability that will hinder migration on a large scale, to say nothing of the lack of desire of masses of people to leave Italy to live in East Africa.

It will be difficult to colonize the soldiers. All soldiers after war want to return home. I remember the sentiment of the American soldiers during the world war. When the armistice was signed we were eager to return to home, family and friends. Some American troops even mutinied to force their return home. These simple problems comrades make Mussolini's so-called victory not so stable.

Secondly, the war in Ethiopia is not over; the Ethiopian people have not been conquered. The history of so-called conquered peo-

ple bear witness to this fact. And if the war in Ethiopia continues Mussolini's position is indeed precarious.

France was more than 30 years "conquering the Moroccans and has not yet fully subdued them. Guerrilla warfare was carried on in the air, in mountain passes in every nook and corner. The fight of the Chinese people against armies of enslavers bear witness to how effective people's movements can be against invaders. The history of America's struggle for independence is replete with heroic deeds of guerilla warfare.

At the turn of the 18th century the Haitian people, under the leadership of Touissant L'Overture, carried on a similar fight. They carried out a heroic struggle against the finest armies of Napoleon who had just returned from great battles in Europe. For more than 13 years the issue hung in the ballance but the Haitians were finally victorious and achieved their independence by means of ambush, hide and seek, guerilla warfare.

Colonel John C. Robinson, the Negro aviator who has just returned from Ethiopia, where he was a personal aviator to the Emperor, reported at a very enthusiastic meeting at Rockland Palace that more than 170,000 Ethiopian armed soldiers have pushed to the west of Addis Ababa ready to harass the enemy, and for guerrilla warfare. Even guarded reports from censored news despatches out of Ethiopia state that again and again Italian troops have been fired upon from ambush, and when the army marched to Addis Ababa there were cases of sniping. As a matter of fact, the so-called rioting in Addis Ababa just prior to the entrance of the fascist troops was nothing more or less than a fight on the part of departing people to gather ammunition and other means and instruments to fight with.

Colonel Robinson also reported that the occupation of Addis Ababa was not a military victory but a simple military march of the fascist troops into the town, facilitated by defection of some of the rases, and from a military view point, because of the outrageous use of poison gas against which the Ethiopian troops had no defense.

Thirdly, the above factors determine the next step of Mussolini (which is the step that fascist and militarist forces are planning daily): to solve his problems through a new world war of *conquest*. Yesterday's newspapers already carried some of Mussolini's predictions and his future plans for war are influenced by the action of Hitler fascism, *the greatest single factor making for war today*. Indeed the military move of Hitler into the Rhineland, and its nothing less than a military action, since military movement and objective are involved, that is, of placing German fascists in a position for military attack on France and aggressions against Russia. The actions of Hitler therefore give the signal both to Italy and Japan as well as the reactionary fascist elements in all countries that want war.

We are faced therefore with the danger of war for reshuffling of colonies on a broader scale than the occupation of Addis Ababa. Indeed, this reshuffling involves the whole continent of Africa. Germany wants the return of old African colonies, Japan wants to subjugate the Pacific and China to her control. Colonial peoples of the world are faced with the danger of fascist invasion and subjugation, carrying with it murder, rape, poison gas, destruction of life and culture on a scale never before seen in the history of the world.

The independence of small nations everywhere is threatened with destruction and division. So far as the United States is concerned there are fascist-minded people who desire and will prosecute a war to carry out similar aims, to tie tighter than ever before ropes of enslavement around the necks of Puerto Rican, Cuban and Filipino peoples. They have plans for complete economic domination of the whole of Latin and Central America. *They have the same aims as Mussolini and Hitler and militarist Japan.* But comrades we must not allow ourselves to be lulled to sleep by the favorable possibilities in Ethiopia against Mussolini. The maintaining of peace must be fought for, the defeat of Mussolini must be fought for, the fight against reaction must be stubbornly pushed. We communists are decisive.

Who are the reactionary forces in our country? What is their tie-up? Comrade Browder described them at the Madison Square Garden meeting as the Republican-Liberty League-Hearst-Talmadge combination. They are aligned with the munition makers, the big financial capitalists. What is the tie-up in Harlem?

We must bear in mind the plans and methods of the fascist Liberty League politicians, the reactionary Republicans. They are carefully bringing together from both the old parties the most reactionary forces. Tammany for example is closely tied up with the reactionary Republicans, through the Liberty League and oppose the Roosevelt Democrats. Let us not fail to see this. It is necessary for our work here in Harlem to understand this tie-up. The Talmadges, the Al Smiths are directly tied up with the Hearst Liberty Leaguers. As a matter of fact Al Smith delivered the opening speech of the election campaign for the Liberty Leaguers. The Talmadges, the Hearsts who support and are instrumental in carrying out lynchings and organizing Black Legions against the Negro people, and Tammany democrats, who never yet raised one finger against lynchings, are in company with lynchers.

Moreover Tammany together with Hearst is responsible for the introduction of the Lyons bill into the City Council, a bill that aims at throwing the foreign-born off relief and out of W.P.A. and project jobs; and particularly here in Harlem it is directed against the West Indian people. These are indeed fascist actions. We need to awaken the people.

Tammany is responsible also for the passage in the State Legis-



lature of the McNaboe Bill for the investigation of so-called subversive movements, which means any movement or organization in the state and in Harlem is at the mercy of racketeers, gangsters and Red baiters.

Our friend, Assemblyman Andrews, a Tammany democrat, from our own district voted for this bill. How can Mr. Andrews stand before the people of Harlem, the Negro people in particular and subject them through this bill to the meddling of fascist-minded people, in their organizations and their affairs, and indeed, even to stop movements for the defense of Ethiopia. Already we know that the state secretary is carrying out investigations of all people who are connected with any work for Ethiopian defense. This power will be facilitated through the McNaboe bill voted for by Andrews. Mr. Andrews: You cannot bemoan the plight of the people as causing their leftward trend which you did in speaking to the bill and then for Tammany loyalty, vote in favor of a measure that's fundamentally against them.

We in Harlem must give serious attention to Mr. Andrews who on the one hand flirts with the left in order to win favor, and with the other hand votes for measures that are detrimental to the interests of the people he is supposed to represent. Tammany is connected with Hearst, with the Liberty Leagues, with the most reactionary forces in American politics today.

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These fascist forces of the Republicans have raised their nasty heads in the state of Michigan. Already the afternoon papers report startling information exposing the Black Legion in Michigan. This Legion is definitely fascist; it is anti-semitic, anti-Negro, anti-catholic, anti-labor, anti-Communist. Reports so far as we are able to get now, state that they have been responsible for the murder of more than 50 people. It is reported that more than 135,000 are organized and armed in Michigan alone. The Black Legion supported by the Wolverine Republicans are political bed-brothers of Tammany.

Tammany is directly connected with the recent disturbances in Harlem, which are called by the capitalist press, "riots organized by Mr. Kemp, a Communist." We know Mr. Kemp is not a Communist; he is a rabid red baiter and anti-Communist. But there is a reason on the part of Tammany and the capitalist press for labelling Mr. Kemp a Communist. They try to hide their own guilt.

These disturbances in Harlem were organized in order to enforce the anti-noise law for the suppression of free speech and assembly and to allow for the excuse of sending into Harlem an "army of occupation", to break up the movement for independent political action in Harlem.

So we find Mayor LaGuardia and Tammany working hand in

glove against the people of Harlem. Mr. LaGuardia's anti-noise law is fully and forcefully applied by Tammany's police. It is interesting as well as revealing to note the statement of the Tammany judge who tried the case of Kemp. He said, "It is unfortunate that you police did not bring him in with a charge of disorderly conduct so that we could give him a sentence of six months. I will only fine him \$5 for violation of the anti-noise law." This is exactly what the Tammany people want. They are concerned more with destroying the liberties of the people of Harlem and setting the precedent with the anti-noise law, than the liberty of Mr. Kemp who after all is only one individual. Who knows but that this is also satisfactory to Mr. Kemp. Mr. Kemp serves here as an instrument of Tammany. He raised no political objection to the charge against him, of violating a law that aims to suppress free speech in Harlem.

It was the Communist Party that immediately raised an objection to the anti-noise law and its application and on the following day organized a meeting at the Y.M.C.A. for the purpose of getting a delegation of people of Harlem to protest against this attack on the civil rights of the people as well as against the whole system of police brutality in Harlem.

We know because we were there, that the police directly provoked the people at 133rd Street last Monday night in order to have an excuse for breaking up the meeting. This is a move on the part of the Tammany police to break up the splendid movement which is under way for *independent political action* and which gains impetus from the movement for the defense of Ethiopia. Tammany wants to destroy this movement for unity in Harlem, because Tammany has never done one thing to assist the Ethiopian people, nevertheless wants to keep the people away from any independent political action and broad unity for Ethiopian defense.

Thus, Tammany is not befriending the Ethiopian people, as some honest people think they are doing, or fail to see that they are not doing, but is disrupting the forces that are striving for unity and for real assistance to the Ethiopian people. Let us take for example the actions of Tammany police at the parade and demonstration organized last week by the United Aid Committee for Defense of Ethiopia.

This parade was organized by really sincere and earnest people, People who have the interest of the Ethiopian people close to their heart; and everybody in Harlem, that is, every person who is honest, wants to aid Ethiopia. There was disturbance! Who caused this disturbance?

Mr. Kemp and his group, assisted by Tammany police. His main argument was that there should be no parade in Harlem that included Italians, then he later changed it to include "no whites at all". We stood pat. The Father Divine people stood pat. Dr. Savory of the United Committee stood pat. Mr. Kemp and his group raved. They organized a street meeting and called

for breaking up the parade. The police were happy over the situation. They wanted to call off the parade in order "to prevent disturbance". The police are wise people.

Let me tell you comrades of conversations which I had with two ranking police officers, the Negro Lieutenant Battle, and a white police Captain. They both came to me at different times. The white captain pretending interest in the parade, indeed, in our movement for Ethiopia and he said in a condescending "friendly" manner: "Look here, Mr. Ford, it is too bad that your people can't get together. You know I am interested in the colored people but they are so disunited. Why is that? Why can't they get together?"

Lieutenant Battle came a little while later and he said practically the same thing only he was *interested* as a Negro "in his people". "It is too bad," he said, "I think I will have to call the parade off. You see, Kemp and his group don't want a parade with whites in it. I don't see why he objects when they are all fighting for Ethiopia." These were the sob words of "our friends" the police. But meanwhile we know that the Kemps were carrying on their disruptive tactics with the tacit support of the police. The police would go from us to them and back again. Finally we got tired of their actions and said to them we are going ahead with our parade. We are tired of the actions of you Tammany police. "You ask me why this situation? It is because you Tammany people are behind it just as you are behind the disruptive actions going on in the U.N.I.A. movement today." I had no more bother from these people.

As the parade moved along down Lenox Avenue (and it was a very impressive parade as you comrades recall) and came to the point where Kemp and his group hold sway. There was Kemp on a ladder slandering the parade, calling for boycott of the parade and attacking whites. He had a number of rank and file people of the Garvey movement around him.

All at once something very significant happened, about 50 or more grabbed the Ethiopian and American flags from the ladder where Kemp was speaking and ran into the ranks of the parade. They began waving the Ethiopian flag and marching along with us.

Here is about what happened in the minds of these people. They no doubt began to reason: *What is Kemp talking about? We call ourselves as Garveyites, people who take the lead and stand in the forefront for Negro liberation. There goes a parade for the defense of Ethiopia and we are not in it. We declare that we are the best fighters for Ethiopian independence. But look there other people are taking the lead. How does this come about? That will never do. Let us get into that parade.*

And they got into the parade and marched with us. So you see comrades that Ethiopia is an important issue.

The struggle for the defense of Ethiopia is one of the great

issues in Harlem for uniting the people against war and fascism and for independent political action. Tammany knows this. But of course Tammany is not for independent political action. Tammany wants the people of Harlem to vote for Tammany. They do not aid nor do they desire to aid Ethiopia. We Communists, black and white, are carrying on the fight for unity, for aid to Ethiopia.

The disrupters are making resistance against the forces that want to unite for defense of Ethiopia, they actually help to suppress mass action for Ethiopian defense. They cover up their actions with deceitful talk about first "unifying our forces", that is the Negroes, away with "outsiders", down with the "Reds". But in actual practice this amounts to the most disgraceful capitulation to Tammany that *has never aided Ethiopia*, that supports Hearst and what is more Tammany in Harlem is nothing but the dictatorship of the white Tammany Hut downtown. What Harlem needs is *all Harlem independent action* of and by the people of Harlem, all those who work and live here, all those who are really interested in the problems of Harlem, black and white.

How far do the disruptive actions of the Tammany police extend in Harlem?

We Communists have made some very good friendships in the U.N.I.A. movement. Many of the followers of the Garvey movement have learned to like us because of our work and initiative on the Ethiopian issue, and also because of aid to many of them through Unemployment Councils. We have, through the unemployed movement, helped them get relief. Many of them have consequently joined the Unemployment Councils.

In addition to this we must record the fact that we have come closer to them by changing our tactics and method of approach to them; in order words, we have overcome to a great extent our sectarianism. We have been able to convince many of them, including some outstanding leaders, of the need for united action, for the united front in defense of Negro rights.

With the idea of the united front the New York division of the U.N.I.A. began to grow, the organization made headway; they occupied a new headquarters; their membership became more active. The women wrapped bandages for Ethiopian soldiers; they participated in mass meetings and demonstrations downtown and in the Madison Square Garden meeting (made possible by us). They participated in the National Negro Congress at Chicago and there gained an inspiration for united action never before seen in the U.N.I.A. Indeed, U.N.I.A. people too, are beginning to get out of their sectarianism. They see that there are other people who fight for Negro freedom. The struggle for unity grew. But the struggle for unity does not go along at an easy pace.

The enemy forces (Tammany) began to wake up. They began a campaign to destroy united action. They tried to prevent Capt. King from carrying on these activities. They organized the forces



of reaction against him, when he would not listen to their talks.

Meeting were called by the reaction to impeach Capt. King. The police under the leadership of Lieutenant Battle attended these meetings. They took a direct hand in them. They have finally been able to force Capt. King out. Mrs. Elizabeth Ross Haynes, who never before thought of the Garvey movement, has been sent into it by Tammany to break up united action by attacking Communism. Our tasks have become much more difficult. Our forces must become better organized.

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A word about the Provisional Committee for Defense of Civil Rights. Since the March 19th events in Harlem and even before that time our Party has stood out as staunch fighter for civil rights and against police brutality. Our Party together with the I.L.D. stood out at the hearings of the Commission appointed by the Mayor to investigate the causes of the outbreak. Mayor LaGuardia had intended to carry out a dastardly crime against our Party and its leaders. He had hoped to use the Mayor's Commission to indict and convict Communists as responsible for killings.

But through the militant and fighting action of our Party we turned the attack on LaGuardia and his police department. We stood there staunchly fighting for civil rights, and the people of Harlem came to the support of the Party. The people of Harlem took the lead of the Party, as Bob Minor often puts it, "the people of Harlem stood on their feet and backed the Communist Party".

Out of such actions and out of the previous splendid work of the I.L.D. in Harlem fighting for the Scottsboro boys, for the freedom of Angelo Herndon, a great respect had been created in Harlem for the I.L.D. and the Communist Party. We Communists saw in this situation the possibilities of building of a broader movement for civil liberties and rights, involving many organizations and responsible and respected leaders in Harlem. And there has been organized the United Committee for Civil Rights. Many responsible and outstanding people in the community participate in it.

This movement can and will play a big role in the movement for defense of civil liberties through the people's labor party for independent political action. Already the Provisional Committee has carried on a splendid fight against police brutality which has resulted for the first time in New York in the indictment of a police officer by the name of Charles Brown for a brutal assault on a Negro worker, John McNeill.

These actions are disquieting to Tammany and the Tammany police. The struggle for the preservation of civil liberties which are being encroached upon such as in the anti-noise law arrests, and the fight against police brutality, which reaches such brutal proportions in Harlem, occupy an important place in the movement to build a People's Labor Party for independent political action.

It is such work as this of our Communist Party in Harlem that

is causing Tammany and LaGuardia many sleepless nights. They are, however, busy organizing every available force against us.

How are we meeting our tasks organizationally? How are the people of Harlem reacting to the need for a change in Harlem?

It can be said with great enthusiasm that the people of Harlem are tired of the old parties, particularly Tammany, which is now a bed-fellow of Hearst. They want independent, political action. That is why the work of building up the movement has up to today gained great headway and still growing. Let me tell the comrades about the movement for independent political action.

The initiative was taken by the Joint Committee Against Discriminatory Practices. This Committee that had made a name for itself in the community fighting discrimination, contacted trade union organizations, fraternal organizations, clubs, churches and many other organizations, as well as outstanding people in the community. Among the trade union organizations was the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, the Retail Salesmen's Union, the Laundry Workers Union, the Project Workers Union, the Consolidated Tenants League, The American Federation of Government Employees, the Newspaper Guild and many others.

Among the outstanding leaders of the community were Lester Granger of the Urban League, Ashley Totten, D. J. Phillips, Rev. Licorish and many others. These organizations and leaders sponsored a call for a Conference to discuss independent political action in Harlem.

The Committee printed more than a hundred thousand calls and leaflets. It put out the slogan "A United Harlem Will Mean a Better Harlem". *Unite For Increased Relief, Decent Housing, Adequate Housing, Adequate Hospitalization, New Schools and Recreational Facilities, Jobs at Union Wages.*

It put out the slogan, "Pool the Vote of Harlem".

Advertisements were run in six movie houses in Harlem with the slogan "Unite Harlem for Independent Political Action", "Attend the Conference to Discuss Independent Political Action". For three day these slogans on the screen were greeted with applause by movie goers. Churches and organizations were visited. There was great activity of the members of the Committee.

The Conference was held on April 27th, at Mt. Olivet Baptist Church. There were more than 600 people present; 105 organizations, 280 delegates from every section of Harlem, every type of community group, trade union, church and political organization. There were 16 trade union organizations, two branches of the Socialist Party in Harlem.

The Conference after discussion went on record unanimously for electing a continuation committee to advance the movement for a united All-Harlem political Party. The continuation committee of 60 has been active since that time.

The Committee has now issued a call for a Convention to estab-

lish the All-Harlem Peoples Party. This Convention for June 20th and 21st. It proposes the discussion for a permanent name; it further proposes that the program shall include:

1. More employment for the people of Harlem at trade union wages.
2. Action on the recommendations of the Mayor's Commission on Conditions in Harlem.
3. Adequate relief and medical services for our unemployed.
4. Enactment of the Frazier-Lundeen Social Insurance Bill.
5. Union wages and conditions on all relief projects.
6. Unity of all people in Harlem.
7. Protection of the Civil liberties particularly of the West Indian People.
8. Defense against fascism and war.

This call has been sent out to more than 2,000 organizations. The Committee now has 31 trade unions affiliated. It sent twelve trade union delegates to the Farmer-Labor Party Conference in downtown, New York, last Sunday, in which more than 129 A. F. of L. unions participated.

Comrades, these militant and serious actions of the people of Harlem are frightening Tammany and LaGuardia. That is why they have begun the attack on our Party. That is why we have called this emergency meeting of our Party membership, to mobilize our forces for greater efforts in helping to build the Peoples Party in Harlem. We must increase our work a hundred-fold. We are not afraid of Tammany. We must explain the Peoples Labor Party to broader masses in Harlem. Let me now say a few words about our work in the nationalist organizations such as the U.N.I.A., where Tammany is directing its greatest blows against us, against the movement for Independent political action.

We must approach this nationalist movement and nationalist sentiment in the highest political form and manner.

Are we for the Liberation of the Negro people? Are we opposed to the indignation that has been aroused over the Ethiopian situation, because of the wave of lynchings of Negroes, because of conditions in Harlem that have not been yet remedied?

Of course not! We Negro Communists have revolutionary nationalist aims. We stand with the Negro people in their struggle for human rights, for equal rights, for the independence of Ethiopia, against lynching. The Negro people cannot but be aroused and indignant against these conditions, they cannot but fight against them, they cannot but feel resentment and often even against all whites.

The Negro people have fought and will continue to fight for all these things and against all these veils practised against them. The Negro knows that he must fight or perish. But they will not perish. Under these conditions we Negro Communists find

ourselves, and correctly so, in the very midst of this struggle together with the nationalists, helping to organize and channel this struggle against the white rulers. We Negro Communists have no interest apart from the interest of National liberation of the Negro people. We find ourselves defending the national rights of the Negro people; if we do not we isolate ourselves from them, which we must never do.

We have a record of work and activity in the field for Negro liberation and rights. Forward in the struggle for defense of Ethiopia! Forward to build the Peoples Labor Party movement in Harlem! Win the sincere and honest fighters away from Tammany! Down with police brutality! Preserve the rights and liberties of the People of Harlem!



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